FORDHAM PARISH COUNCIL.

Community Engagement Policy.

Table of Contents

1. Intent 3
2. Purpose/Objective..... 3
3. Scope 3
4. Statutory Community Engagement..... 4
5. Roles and Responsibilities 4
6. Monitoring, evaluation and review..... 4
7. Policy Statement 4
8. Anticipated Outcomes from this Policy..... 4
9. Spectrum of Engagement 5
10. Budget 6
11. Review Process 6

1. **Intent.**

1.1 Fordham Parish Council (the Council) recognises that decision making is enhanced, that services are better delivered, and strategies and policies are more likely to result in better outcomes for the community when members of the community are involved in the decisions which affect them.

1.2 This Community Engagement Policy will promote good governance and guide effective community engagement practices to support good decision making in the public interest. It provides members of the community with a clear understanding of the Council's role and the avenues for meaningful public participation in the Council's decision making.

2. **Purpose/Objective.**

2.1 It is the aim of this Policy to demonstrate the Council's commitment to robust, rigorous and well evaluated community engagement processes. The Policy will guide the delivery of these processes across the organisation to better inform decisions about policy, service planning and delivery.

3. Scope

3.1 The Policy applies to Councillors, Council Staff, Council contractors, Working Groups and any other bodies we engage with including steering groups and advisory committees.

3.2 The Policy articulates the Council's commitment to engaging with the community as a matter of principle and is guided by a framework that contains techniques to ensure a fair and equitable process. The application of the Policy is intended to support the Council's deliberation and decisions around issues affecting the parish now and into the future.

3.3 The Policy will be supported by community engagement guidelines that provide clarity on when it is appropriate to engage, and at what level. Community engagement guidelines and supporting documents will address:

- All activities relating to the planning of community engagement activities;
- Stakeholder management;
- Identification of appropriate tools and recording techniques; and
- Evaluation of community engagement activities.

3.4 The outcome of a robust community engagement process includes quantifiable and attributable information about community needs, aspirations and opinions that can be considered prior to the Council resolving on an issue. This process can enhance democratic process by increasing the likelihood that the Council's decisions are understood and supported by the community and reflect broader community needs and aspirations.

3.5 Community input accrued through engagement processes will be considered along with financial, legal and sustainability considerations in decision making.

4. **Statutory Community Engagement.**

4.1 While community engagement is not mandated in all cases, in some matters the Council is bound by legislation to engage with the community. In these cases Fordham Parish Council will adhere to the legislative requirement as a minimum standard.

4.2 Community engagement is required under the following legislation:
• Local Government Act 1989
• Planning and Environment Act 1987
• Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
• Road Management Act 2004

4.3 While these Acts stipulate required community engagement in certain circumstances, the Council is not prevented from carrying out further community engagement where local sensitivities or project complexities merit additional effort.

5. **Roles and Responsibilities.**

5.1 Fordham Parish Council as the corporate body is responsible for ensuring policy implementation, compliance, monitoring, evaluation and review.

6. **Monitoring, evaluation and review.**

6.1 Compliance with the policy will be measured through evaluation of individual community engagement plans submitted for approval prior to the commencement of engagement activities.

7. **Policy Statement.**

7.1 The Council believes that the community should have the opportunity to participate in decision making activities about issues that affect their lives. In giving effect to this, the Council makes a commitment to:
• Clearly articulate the issue under consideration;
• Clearly identify the level of community influence and limitations if appropriate;
• Seek out those potentially affected by the decision;
• Offer a range of accessible opportunities to participate;
• Recognise and make provision for Fordham's social diversity;
• Consider the needs and values of those involved in the process including decision makers;
• Consider the community input in the decision making process;
• Provide feedback to the participant on how their input influenced the decision;
• Evaluate the engagement process and outcomes; and
• Provide adequate resourcing to the community engagement process.

8. **Anticipated Outcomes from this Policy.**

• Improved governance through assisting elected representatives and the Council's officer/staff to understand, and be informed by, the views of Fordham's community when making decisions on their behalf.
• Improved decision making by ensuring decisions are soundly based on evidence of informed community opinion and take account of the views and experience of those affected by them.
• Improved community ownership of the decisions made by the Council, particularly in relation to those directly affected by the Council's developments.
• Community members feel they have had adequate opportunity to express their views and feel their interests have been considered in the planning, decision making and implementation of those activities.
• Feedback to the community on how their input affected the Council's decision- making.
• Appropriate tools and techniques are used to plan, carry out and evaluate community engagement.

• The Council aims to be open and transparent through following an accessible, clear and systematic process.
• The Council's officer/staff and councillors will be adequately trained and resourced, and confident in undertaking community engagement activities.
• The Council will actively collaborate with relevant organisations and groups to develop robust and inclusive engagement process.
• The skills and capacity of community members to participate in decision making processes are enhanced.

9. **Spectrum of Engagement.**

	Inform	**Consult**	**Involve**	**Collaborate**	**Empower**
Community engagement goal.	To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
Promises to the community.	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide.

Example techniques	Social Media Websites Newsletters Fact sheets Open meetings	Consultation Events Workshops Focus Groups Surveys Questionnaires	Workshops deliberative polling	Advisory committees / working groups Consensus building Participatory decision making	Citizen Juries Ballots Delegated decision

9.2 The Council recognises that community engagement enriches the Council's decision making processes and supports evidence based decision making. It recognises that community engagement helps it fulfil its mandated roles of providing governance and leadership for Fordham through advocacy, decision making and action and fostering community cohesion and encouraging participation in civic life.

10. **Budget.**

10.1 Many aspects of Fordham's community engagement process can be met at a relatively low cost to the council through its website, social media and bi-monthly parish magazine (hand delivered by volunteers to every household in the parish). The Council also has access to meeting rooms for community meetings, consultation events and workshops, etc.

10.2 As a matter of general good practice the Council will source funding for major projects as and when these arise and are identified as being high expenditure such as a Neighbourhood Plan or a Community Led Plan.

11. **Review Process.**

11.1 Fordham Parish Council will review this Action Plan and Policy annually in October as part of the budget process for the coming financial year.

Date Adopted: ……..

Signed: ……..

Print Name: ……

Policy to be reviewed on: ……