GLASTONBURY: TOWNS FUND

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

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1. Introduction

This strategy sets out how engagement and communications will be managed in order to achieve and support the engagement and communication milestones set out by the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to set up the governance, framework, consultation and engagement processes to enable Glastonbury to establish a Town Deal Board, with a view to developing a vision and town investment plan in order to bid for strategic funding of up to £25m, under national £3.6bn Towns Fund scheme.

The success of developing a consensus-based programme of strategic funding interventions is dependent in large part on the ability to engage with all internal and external stakeholders. Staff, Members and Partners directly linked to specific projects are crucial stakeholders to the success of the project.

Each stakeholder group will have its own set of cultures and varying levels of awareness of and engagement in any change programme and this needs to be recognised and reflected in the approaches to engagement.

2. Objectives

- To gain support for the project objectives from elected Members, Staff, Partners and other stakeholders.
- To ensure that stakeholders understand the objectives of the project and individual work streams and the rationale for change.
- To identify, understand and address the stakeholder needs.
- To reassure client groups and other stakeholders that services will continue to be delivered.
- To be open and transparent with members, staff, partners and other stakeholders throughout the programme of works.
- To ensure that people feel involved in the programme and to facilitate two-way communications at all times.
- To demonstrate that the project is an exemplar for the Council to work with key partners, MHCLG, local community groups and businesses to unlock strategic funding in order to address economic challenges and improve opportunities and outcomes for the town of Glastonbury.
- To ensure that genuine consultation is undertaken with all stakeholders where and when appropriate, and in line with MHCLG guidance.

3. Principles

- We (the Project Team) will plan our communications and engagement so they are relevant, timely and informative and appropriately targeted.
- We will engage with all stakeholders (and wider stakeholder groups) so they can contribute to any processes in a timely and appropriate way.
- We will monitor what we do to ensure our communications are effective (**in liaison with the Marketing and Media Team**).
- We will record and acknowledge people's issues and concerns - and deal with them.

4. Approach

To achieve the objectives and reflect the principles it is proposed that:

- The engagement plan is integrated with all governance arrangements.
- It is focussed on the individuals who can be seen to be driving the project forward and making it happen.
- The Project Team is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Engagement and Communication Strategy in conjunction with the Marketing and Media Team and other relevant staff within the Council.
- The plan is kept simple and relies on regular communication which is adapted to the particular needs of stakeholders by the Project Sponsor / Lead.
- Regular briefings are provided to stakeholders across all stakeholder groups.

To achieve the above, the following (if applicable) methods should be considered by the Project:

- Team Briefings – to deliver clear and constant messages.
- Workshops – to deliver clear and consistent messages to a targeted audience.
- Face to Face – as required by the individual stakeholder group.
- Direct engagement – consultation events relevant to individual projects.
- Social Media – delivery of good news stories and project progress updates.
- Corporate intranet/Newsletters/Bulletins (if appropriate).

5. The Communications Loop

Effective communications involves listening as well as informing.   We will:

Tell

- Tell staff, members and other key stakeholders what is happening.
- Show people what we are doing and most importantly allow time for the change to 'sink in'.
- Identify stakeholder groups who are supportive of the process and engage them as champions.

Ask

- To secure engagement and co-operation, it is vital that we listen to concerns and offer support, acknowledge people's feelings, allowing for time to complain and support them.
- Where appropriate we need to engage in consultation with stakeholders which involves seeking views, suggestions and ideas from people.
- We need to establish 'quick wins' which can show what will improve (improved value for money, more efficient options).
- We should ask stakeholders how they want to be communicated with and who by and how they want to be involved in the process.
- We should seek regular feedback on how well our communications plan is working and be prepared to change approaches that aren't delivering the desired objectives.

Revised Consultation methodology in light of COVID-19

Throughout the process, it has become clear that engagement with Glastonbury residents and businesses is crucial to the success of this process. The impact of COVID-19 has been and continue to be a significant barrier in communication. However, in order to mitigate as much as possible, the negative impact of being unable to conduct face to face focus groups and events and in order to consult with all community/business groups relating to significant projects, the following process was agreed:

- Paper based survey to all Glastonbury residents
- Expression of interest forms circulated as widely as possible, including to larger businesses in the District
- All expressions of interest applicants asked to complete questions relating to the Vision and priorities for the town
- Engagement through Board Members and postcards available at locations around Glastonbury to promote the Town Deal
- Promotion through press releases and social media of Accelerator Fund projects and progress with the Town Investment Plan
- Engagement through 'Cluster Groups' – meetings with all groups that submitted an Expression of Interest and then refined Groups as Clusters developed through the development of the Town Investment Plan
- Continued Engagement of residents and businesses through social media, via Council virtual meetings and through radio once the Town Investment Plan has been submitted
- Methods of engagement throughout the next phases to be reviewed and developed as appropriate, dependant on COVID-19 and in line with Government guidelines

6. Stakeholders

Before determining actions, it is essential to identify the stakeholders for the project and consider where they are now in terms of their engagement with the project objectives, and where we need them to be.

General approaches and actions for meeting the needs of stakeholders for all projects are set out in the table below and will link to key project milestones within the overall project plan.

Stakeholder	Nature of information / engagement required	Delivered by / How needs will be met
Senior Management Team	• Understand progress and impacts of the project. Confidence in solution and ability to deliver on time.	• Chief Executives updates at staff/Member briefings. Integrated into Governance Structure.
Group Managers	• Understand the objectives / drivers of the project. • Progress on project. • Dates and times of changes. • Show links to other projects initiatives. • Why will this work? • How will this affect the Council?	• Briefing sessions. • Regular updates via Project Lead or Sponsor.

	• To consult once the business cases have been developed.	
Members	• Understand progress. Confidence in solution and ability to deliver on time. Fit with broader Council strategy.	Integrated into Governance Structure.
Member Boards / Portfolio Holder(s)	As above.	Portfolio Holders integrated into Governance Structure. Regular briefing by Project Board
Staff and on-site partners	• Understand the objectives / drivers of the project. • Progress on project in terms of implications upon availability of public parking and measures undertaken to ameliorate loss of parking.	• Regular updates via email from Project Board to staff and Partners. • Briefings from Group Managers as appropriate for Mendip District Council staff. • Consultation through Joint Staff Consultative Committee and Partner meetings.
Town & District Councillors	• Understand progress and impacts of the project • Ability to meaningfully engage and communicate on the process • Confidence and support the solution • Ability to achieve key milestones	Integrated into Governance Structure.
Media (as / if required)	• Impact on the public. • Impact on Council Services. • Impact on local jobs. Public Impact on local Council Services /costs / savings.	• Press releases at key milestone points in the project. • One dedicated media contact.
Local communities and residents	Key priorities on place shaping Barriers and opportunities What does success look like	• Press releases adapted for Council web-sites.
Key councils / partners	Regular updates and involvement throughout the development of the TIP and then business cases	•