**Halewood Town Council**

**Community Engagement Policy**

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| **SUBJECT: Community Engagement Policy** |
| **APPLICABLE: All Town Council Employees, Volunteers and Contractors** |
| **APPROVED BY HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL :- February 2016** |

1. **Aims & Objectives**

Halewood Town Council is an open and transparent Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. It has in the past, and will continue to do so in the future, listen to the needs and concerns of our community, and will do everything within its power and financial constraints, to make Halewood a better place to live, work, visit or do business.

1. **The Halewood Community**

Halewood Town Council is keen to reach all groups and individuals who live, work or do business in the Township. It has historical links with local Church Groups, Community and Voluntary and Residents Associations, all working hard for the good of Halewood, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the Council, its Members, and its staff.

1. **Provision of Information to the Community**

Halewood Town Council communicates with its community in a variety of ways. These include:-

* + A web-site [www.halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.halewoodtowncouncil.gov.uk) that goes beyond the work of the Town Council, and provides links to many other useful services.
  + A Twitter feed @halewoodtc which has an increasing number of ‘followers’.
  + An Annual Report, which is delivered annually to every home in the Township. This booklet is not just an information guide to Town Council services, but also highlights contributions from the many organisations working within Halewood.
  + The bi-monthly contribution of at least a two page Town Council

Newsletter in the local free newspaper, “The Halewood Focus”.

* + The publishing of agenda for all Council meetings, both on-line and on various notice boards around the Township.
  + The Town Council’s involvement in the Annual Parish Meeting, with its public question time.
  + The annual External Audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts, and Balance Sheet. A synopsis of the financial accounts is published within the Annual Report, and also in an edition of Halewood Focus Community News.
  + The ability to provide Town Council information, when requested, to those with a need for Braille documents.

1. **Opportunities for Community Involvement**

Halewood Town Council will make every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement.

These will include the following methods:-

* The Town Council have a public forum session at every Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues “Appertaining to the Township”. Electors can pre-register to speak before the Council with the Town Manager, or if the Chairman decrees that time allows, permit a member of the public to raise an issue without prior notice.
* The Town Council also has a track record in gauging public opinion via consultation exercises either directly or in partnership with others.
* The Annual Report includes postage free opportunity for members of the community to let the Town Council know ‘How well we are doing’. The results of this public consultation exercise is analyzed and helps inform Council priorities.
* The community can also register their views via the Town Council website, which incorporates polls, which can be completed on-line.

1. **Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council**

It has already been stated many opportunities exist for the public to make formal representations to the Town Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, are included as a stated item on the next agenda.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged within four working days.

In any public consultation exercise or survey, the Town Council publish the evaluation results.

1. **Involvement in Partnerships**

Halewood Town Council has representation on the Borough Council’s Halewood Local Advisory Group (LAG) at Elected Member Level. The Town Manager ‘formally’ represents the Town Council on the LAG. The current Town Manager is also chair of the Halewood Children’s Centre Advisory Board.

Additionally, there is Elected Members representation on a number of Halewood based community and voluntary organisations that serve our community.

1. **Role of Council Members and Officers**

As an open and transparent Town Council, both Members and officers seek to offer a high quality professional service to all whom they serve. Members regularly interact with their community in a number of roles, (including that of Elected Member for the principal authority as well were appropriate), some of which have already been mentioned. Both Members and officers are keen to maintain relevant Codes of Conduct in their business, and see the community as “customers” rather than an electorate.