



Bromsgrove District Council Engagement Policy 2026-2028

Title	Bromsgrove District Council Engagement Policy 2026-2028
Description	This policy sets out the Council's approach to delivering inclusive and meaningful community engagement over the period 2026–2028.
Created by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Date created	April 2026
Maintained by	Engagement and Equalities Advisor
Next Review Date	April 2028

Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Status

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1. Purpose

At Bromsgrove District Council, we want residents, communities and partners to feel informed, listened to and able to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. Engagement helps us understand how people experience services, what matters to them, and how decisions may affect different communities. This insight supports better understanding, strengthens the evidence we use, and helps ensure decisions are fair, balanced and responsive to local needs.

This policy provides a framework for planned consultation and engagement on wider Council policies, strategies, service changes and significant decisions. It sits alongside the day-to-day democratic routes through which residents raise individual matters with councillors and officers.

This Engagement Policy builds on the engagement work already taking place across the Council and the learning gained from it. In recent years, we have strengthened how we engage with communities, developing a more consistent and practical approach that supports service delivery and decision-making.

As we continue to develop our approach between 2026 and 2028, we will focus on making engagement accessible and proportionate, maintaining and strengthening relationships with communities and partners, and continuing to listen to a wide range of voices, particularly those who may be less likely to take part. We will be open about how feedback is used and realistic about what engagement can influence, helping to build trust over time.

The policy also supports the Council through Local Government Reorganisation, helping ensure residents, communities, businesses and partners remain informed and able to contribute to discussions about future services and local priorities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all consultation and engagement activity undertaken or commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council the Council is seeking views from residents, communities, businesses, partners or stakeholders to help shape policies, strategies, service design, service changes, priorities or other significant decisions. Activity may range from statutory consultation to more informal engagement and may take place at a corporate, service, or local level.

Engagement may be undertaken to meet statutory requirements or to support service improvement and community involvement. It plays an important role in understanding views and informing policies, priorities, services, budgets, and decision-making, including supporting Equality Impact Assessments.

It does not apply to individual enquiries, requests for service, complaints, appeals, enforcement matters, planning or licensing casework, or other specific cases raised by residents with councillors or officers. These matters are considered through the relevant statutory, democratic, complaints, customer service or casework processes.

This policy applies to external consultation and engagement activity only. It does not cover internal consultation within the organisation, such as matters relating to employee pay and conditions, which are managed separately through Human Resources. Consultation on planning applications, the Local Plan, and Traffic Regulation Orders is also outside the scope of this policy.

Across all engagement activity, the Council will take a coordinated and proportionate approach. This includes using established engagement channels and partnerships, encouraging participation from a wide range of people, and using a mix of methods to reflect different needs and circumstances. The Council will be clear about what can be influenced and will ensure that feedback is considered alongside other relevant evidence when making decisions.

3. Building on our Successes

Engagement activity across the Council has helped us build a better understanding of how people want to take part and what supports meaningful involvement. We have delivered a wide range of engagement activity, including consultations on local planning and regeneration, service-level engagement in areas such as housing and community services, and corporate surveys used to inform decision-making. Partnership working, for example through community wellbeing groups and local networks, has also helped strengthen local insight and collaboration.

We know that engagement works best when it is clear, relevant and easy to access, and when people understand how their feedback will be used. Using a mix of online and face-to-face approaches has helped us reach a broader range of people, while working with voluntary and community organisations has strengthened trust and improved our reach into different communities.

This learning will continue to shape how we approach engagement, ensuring it remains practical, proportionate and focused on supporting effective decision-making.

4. Our Responsibilities

National responsibilities

The Council has a responsibility to involve residents and communities in its work. This includes requirements under legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Local Government Acts and national guidance. We follow established principles of good consultation, ensuring engagement takes place at the right time, provides clear information and allows people to give informed views. Alongside this, our approach reflects a broader commitment to openness, transparency and accountability.

What this means locally

In Bromsgrove, engagement supports the Council's priorities and the delivery of the Equality Strategy and Action Plan. It helps us understand lived experiences and identify how different people may be affected by decisions. This includes continuing to improve how we reach a range of communities, use insight to inform service delivery and link engagement more clearly to equality considerations and service planning.

We will continue to use a mix of digital and non-digital methods to ensure engagement remains accessible and appropriate.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Council recognises that Local Government Reorganisation will bring significant change as Worcestershire transitions to two new unitary authorities from April 2028. During this period, engagement will be an essential tool for understanding the needs, priorities and concerns of residents, communities and stakeholders. We are committed to providing clear opportunities for

people to participate in conversations about the future of local services and places, ensuring that community insight helps inform planning and decision-making throughout the transition. By taking an open, accessible and coordinated approach, we will support meaningful involvement and help maintain trust during a period of change.

5. Our Approach to Community Engagement

What we mean by community engagement

Residents and stakeholders can influence the Council's work through a range of democratic, customer service and engagement routes, including elected Members, public meetings, committee and scrutiny processes, petitions, and provide feedback through established customer feedback and complaints processes. Information on these routes is available through the Council's website. These routes are an important part of local democracy. This policy focuses specifically on planned consultation and engagement activity, rather than individual casework or service requests.

Community engagement is about listening to people, understanding their experiences and involving them, where appropriate, in decisions that affect their lives. It builds on existing engagement activity across the Council and ranges from providing information through to working more closely with communities to shape services and solutions.

Why engagement matters

Engagement helps the Council better understand local needs and experiences, design services that are more accessible and appropriate, and make informed and balanced decisions. It also supports stronger relationships with communities and helps build trust over time.

For communities, engagement provides an opportunity to share views, contribute to local decisions and better understand how services are shaped. Where appropriate, it can also support confidence and involvement in local issues.

Good engagement is clear, proportionate and takes place early enough to support decision-making.

What we mean by community

People may identify with communities in different ways, including where they live, shared interests or experiences, or aspects of identity or background. Individuals may belong to more than one community.

Our approach reflects this by building on existing connections while continuing to reach a broader range of people and perspectives.

6. Who is Involved and How We Work Together

Community engagement is a shared responsibility across the Council. Understanding how people experience services is an important part of delivering effective and responsive services. Engagement activity already takes place across a range of services, and this policy supports a more coordinated and consistent approach.

Across the Council engagement is coordinated to reduce duplication, make best use of resources and ensure that insight is shared and used effectively.

Service areas lead engagement relevant to their work, supported by the Policy Team. This includes designing proportionate engagement, selecting appropriate methods and using findings to inform decisions and service improvements.

Elected Members play an important role in representing community views and supporting engagement locally. Through ward work, surgeries, local conversations, committee meetings, scrutiny, casework and day-to-day contact with residents, Members help ensure local views, concerns and experiences are understood and reflected in the Council's work. Members play a key role in ensuring community engagement reaches as many residents as possible and help to interpret what the feedback tells us, alongside our shared understanding of a topic.

Putting this into Practice

Community engagement will continue to be part of how the Council works day to day, building on existing practice.

Embedding engagement in everyday work

Engagement will be reflected in policy development, service design and review, budget setting and Equality Impact Assessments. This helps ensure decisions are informed by a combination of service knowledge, data and local insight.

A proportionate and inclusive approach

We recognise that not all decisions require the same level of engagement and that people experience different barriers to participation. Engagement will be proportionate to the issue and supported by a mix of methods, with adjustments made where needed to support accessibility.

Working alongside the Equality Strategy

Engagement supports the delivery of the Equality Strategy and Action Plan by helping the Council understand lived experience, recognise different needs and consider the potential impact of decisions.

Engagement during change

During Local Government Reorganisation, we will use engagement to understand local needs, explain developments clearly and support residents, communities, businesses and partners to contribute where decisions can be influenced.

Working with partners and communities

We will continue to work with voluntary, community and partner organisations to strengthen relationships, improve reach and make best use of local knowledge. This helps ensure engagement is practical, relevant and informed by local understanding.

7. Monitoring and Learning

We will take a data-led approach to engagement so that it helps improve outcomes for residents and supports the delivery of the best possible services. For each engagement exercise, we will set clear aims linked to the decision, service or outcome being considered, including who we need to hear from, the level of take-up we are seeking and how we will monitor whether the

approach is reaching a broad and representative range of people. Where appropriate, this will include reviewing participation data, representation and the effectiveness of the methods used. We will use this learning to strengthen future engagement and improve service design and delivery.

8. Get Involved and Contact Us

You can find out about current consultations and engagement opportunities on the Council website www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/strategy/consultations/

We welcome feedback and involvement from residents, partners and community groups.

Email: equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

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