

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STATEMENT OF INTENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Through the use of a wide range of approaches to public consultation and community engagement, the City of Durham Parish Council aims to ensure that it actively encourages residents to inform its decision-making process and make an input into decisions that affect their day to day lives in the parish.

The City of Durham Parish Council is committed to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community. The Council recognises that there are different levels of engagement and will endeavour to involve the community in the following ways:

- Inform people about its work and the services it provides.
- Consult with and seek out the views of the community.
- Encourage community participation in local government.
- Collaborate with individuals, community groups and organisations where appropriate, to achieve agreed aims for the benefit of the Parish.
- Build up effective working relationships within the community and encourage a sense of ownership of assets, infrastructure and new projects.
- Carry out its work in a non-political manner and with no political bias.

THE COMMUNITY

The City of Durham Parish Council seeks to engage with all sections of the community regardless of age, ability, gender, ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation, the local business community, the many clubs, organisations and societies which are active in the parish, its partners such as Durham County Council and the neighbourhood policing team, local Faith Leaders, local Member of Parliament and our County Councillors.

The Parish Council is committed to engaging with any persons or groups who have an interest in matters relating to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our area.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Durham Parish Council recognises that members of the community may wish to engage with it at different levels and in a variety of ways, from the occasional email or letter with a suggestion on how a service could be improved, to attendance at meetings etc. The City of Durham Parish Council will therefore use as many ways as possible to actively seek the views of its parishioners and involve them in its work. Examples of this include:

Publications: The Parish Council will communicate with parishioners through regular articles in the local press and emails to local residents' groups, as well as the annual report.

Website: The Parish Council website <https://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/> is a community resource which publishes information about our community. Parish Council agendas, minutes, accounts and other documents will be posted on this website for parishioners' information. Parishioners are invited to contact the Parish Council via the website or via email at:

parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

The City of Durham Parish Council is committed to develop and improve its website and will actively encourage parishioners to use it as a means of improving communication.

Direct Access: The Parish Council will display a list of all Parish Councillors together with other important points of contact on all notice boards. This medium will also be used to directly advertise other important events e.g., notices relating to the annual audit of accounts; casual vacancies, elections, etc. Details of the Parish Council's publication scheme and the address of Durham County Council's Monitoring Officer will also be displayed on the website for parishioners' information.

Meetings: Notice of all Council meetings is given on the Parish Council's website. Parishioners are encouraged to attend Full Council and Committee meetings and time is set aside at all meetings for public participation at all these meetings. Parishioners are also actively encouraged to attend the Annual meeting of electors, which is advertised as above.

Surveys: The City of Durham Parish Council will undertake surveys and other related forms of information gathering from time to time to ascertain the community's views on a particular issue.

Fora: The City of Durham Parish Council will organise a Forum for all properly constituted community and residents' associations within the parish area, to meet on a regular basis to discuss matters of mutual interest. Recommendations and minutes from meetings of the Forum will be submitted to the council and, where relevant, its committees.

Specific Projects: The City of Durham Parish Council will undertake specific projects for the benefit of the community and will, where appropriate, seek the views of the local community on such projects.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Representations to the City of Durham Parish Council or one of its committees will normally be considered at the next meeting of the relevant Committee and/or Full Council and may be made in writing or in person subject to agreement with the Clerk and Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council. Representations in person are governed by the procedures laid down in Standing Orders.

If, however, they require the provision of information only, then the Clerk will provide it in accordance with the Council's publication scheme.

Members of the public may also access copies of the latest agreed minutes from Full Council and its Committees meetings via the Parish Council's website.

The Parish Council has a Complaints Procedure for handling complaints, which is available from the Clerk, published on the website and reviewed annually. The publication of agendas on the Parish Council's website gives parishioners the opportunity to make representation to the Council before agenda items are discussed. All formal representations received are responded to in writing.

INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Durham Parish Council is committed to partnership working where it is clear that it will be of benefit to the Parish or to fulfil its statutory requirements.

ROLE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS IN CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Parish Councillors are powerful advocates for their community and their leadership role enables them to have a major input into the consultation and engagement process.

City of Durham Parish Councillors are very accessible:

- Their details will be published on notice boards, on the website and in the annual report to parishioners.
- They are available to talk to parishioners during the public session prior to each Full Council and at the Annual meeting of electors.
- In a private capacity, they may belong to many other local clubs, societies and organisations, where they may, if they so wish, promote the work of the Parish Council and be available to parishioners.

Date adopted: July 2025

Date to be reviewed: May 2026