



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES



Our framework



ENGAGING WITH KINGSTON'S COMMUNITIES



This framework outlines the council's approach to community engagement.

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01

OUR FRAMEWORK

This framework sets out how we will 'hardwire' effective engagement into decision-making so it is integral in how we work and make decisions.

We are clear about our ambition to improve community engagement. This means a change of culture across the whole council and we will use the framework to shape that change.

Our corporate plan - Making Kingston Better, Together - outlines our ambition for community engagement:



"We want to be known as a council that is an exemplar for community engagement. We are far from that at the moment but in this new era for the council, we are focusing on strengthening the relationship between the council and the community - residents, businesses, students, voluntary and community groups. Kingston has a vibrant and engaged voluntary sector which creates opportunities to maximise community participation. We want to 'hardwire' effective engagement into our decision making - involving residents early on in the design of local services and the things that affect them.





A Corporate Peer Review (January 2019) carried out by the Local Government Association acknowledged that the council is committed to improving community engagement. The report called for the council to show leadership and to set out clearly what we will do differently.

The framework aims to build a common understanding of how we can improve engagement by setting principles and standards - building clear, shared expectations that focus on what can be achieved.

It also sets out what the council will do and how we will shape a new approach and culture across the organisation.

Using the framework as a guide, we want to improve so we hear more views earlier to shape what we do.

We are trying new ways of engaging people, testing different methods to see what works in Kingston. We appreciate that we have a lot to do to make this a reality and this framework outlines the commitment we are making for the next three years.

The framework forms a basis for how we will work to get better at all forms of engaging, from the basics - such as being much clearer in the language we use and the communications we produce (e.g. letters, emails and information on the website) through to new ways for communities and businesses to lead on redesigning services and taking decisions (using methods such as community budgeting, co-design, open democracy online platforms and citizens' assemblies).

In the longer term we aim to have services, policies and priorities that are shaped with and by communities to improve outcomes for people who live, work and study in Kingston.

The framework outlines an approach to engagement - inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower and decide (using the International Association for Public Participation - iap2 - spectrum of public participation).

COMMUNITIES

Communities can be broadly split into:

- Communities of place
- Communities of interest
- Communities of identity



1

COMMUNITIES OF PLACE

Defined by location (such as an area, a street, an estate, a ward, a pub or community centre).



2

COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Defined by a shared interest or experience which might include tenants and resident groups, allotment holders, people involved in environmental projects, or people who come together to use services such as parks, green spaces, or community buildings.



3

COMMUNITIES OF IDENTITY

Defined as people who share a particular experience, interest or stake in an issue, or characteristics such as young people, older people, disabled people, ethnic groups, or lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people or other common bonds such as student or business communities.





02 WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE TOGETHER

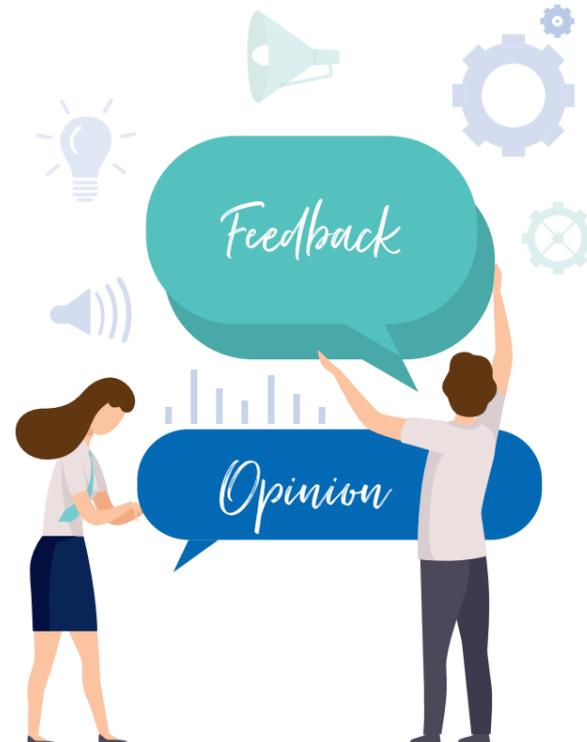
We want to ensure we are doing the best we can at every point on the engagement framework.

We want to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower - by:

- Reaching more people to help give everyone a voice, especially people we seldom hear from
- Having a clear and consistent approach
- Ensuring we co-ordinate our activity so people have time, opportunity and space to have a say on what matters to them
- Encouraging better decision-making and problem-solving by hearing more ideas and voices as early as possible.

Through an agreed approach we will:

- Increase and strengthen the role of communities in how we live, work and study in Kingston
- Involve more people in the democratic process and enable communities to influence decisions
- Support communities to take action by helping identify needs and developing their own solutions
- Measure how effective we are.



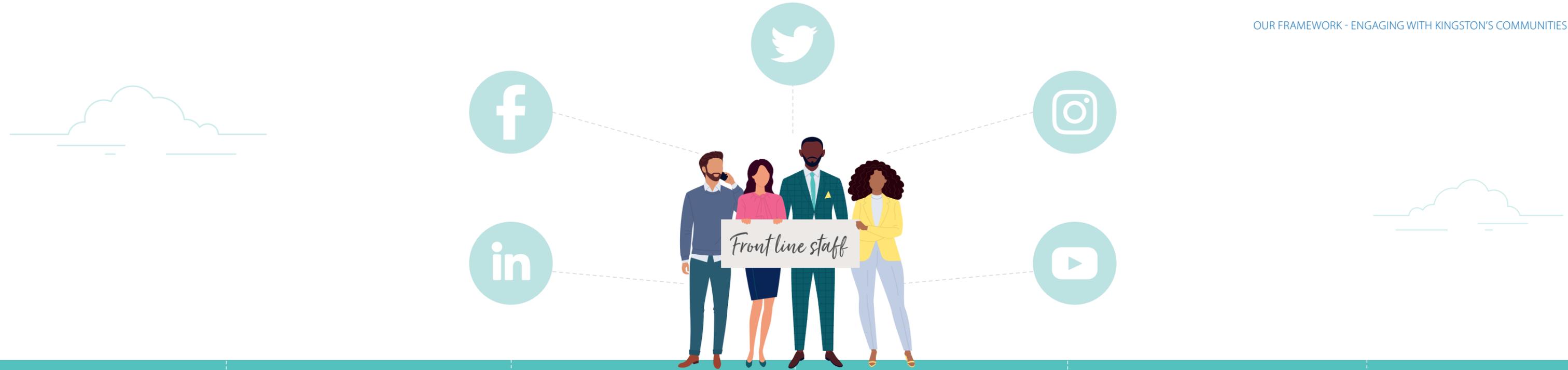
03 OUR DEFINITIONS

The definitions we use in our framework.



04 WAYS OF ENGAGING

Engaging with our communities in a variety of ways, as we work together to achieve positive change.



INFORM

- Website
- Videos
- Newsletters
- Letters and emails



CONSULT

- Surveys
- Kingston Let's Talk online portal
- Polls and voting



INVOLVE

- Workshops
- Interactive websites
- Volunteering
- Crowd sourcing
- Neighbourhood committees



COLLABORATE

- Crowd funding
- Online democracy
- Volunteering building civic muscle
- Advisory committees
- Forums



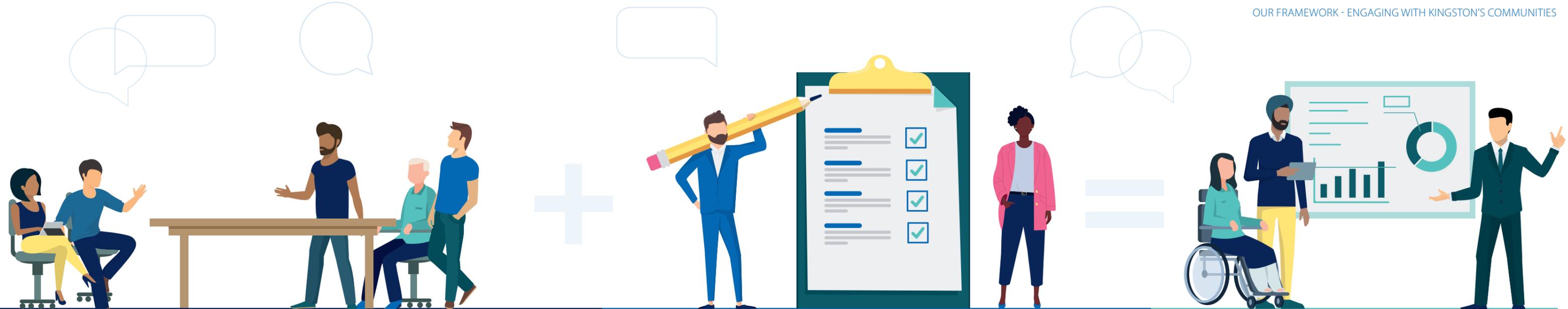
EMPOWER & DECIDE

- Co-design
- Resident juries
- Citizens' assembly
- Participatory decision making

05

HOW ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING

Engagement to enable decisions.



ENGAGEMENT	CONSULTATION	DECISION
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<p>AT EARLY STAGE</p> <p>Engage and collaborate with large range of people and communities directly to consider their concerns and aspirations as part of shaping initial options.</p> <p>Includes co-design and policy shaping. Tends to be qualitative.</p>	<p>BASED ON THE FEEDBACK FROM ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Systematic collection of community views on a range of options, solutions, alternatives and potential decisions.</p> <p>Usually uses defined questions to shape proposals or recommendations. Tends to be quantitative.</p>	<p>CULMINATION OF THE PROCESS, DECISION MADE WITH INPUT FROM COMMUNITIES</p> <p>service, policy or issue; decision made by communities through variety of mechanisms; or delegated officer decision. Engagement and consultation shapes the final options and decisions.</p>
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<p><i>Examples:</i> Workshops, forums, meetings, online polls, co-design, citizen assemblies, participatory decision making</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i> Formal consultations online, face to face, surveys, interviews, telephone surveys</p>	<p><i>Examples:</i> Public questions at meetings, petitions, statements, participatory democracy, assemblies</p>
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06 MAKING ENGAGEMENT REAL

Some of the activities outlined here can be achieved relatively quickly - others will take longer.

The overall time frame is that the activity will be achieved in the next three years (2019 - 2022).



INVOLVING PEOPLE

Encouraging and supporting communities to be involved in issues that matter to them by:

- Ensuring that communities are at the heart of deciding priorities, developing services and making decisions
- Having conversations in places where people usually meet
- Making better use of Let's Talk face to face conversations
- Having conversations about how we allocate budgets to match priorities
- Working together with communities to develop plans and commission services
- Using co-production more for commissioning
- Carrying out a Citizens' Assembly to tackle air quality in Kingston
- Asking residents to decide the topic for State of the Borough debates

- Improving how we engage with everyone - and in particular with businesses and young people.

BEING CLEAR

Working openly and honestly and with integrity with communities. Ensuring our language is clear and information is easy to find by:

- Reviewing information on the website to ensure it's clear and easy to read
- Improving the information for staff in libraries and other public facing roles to enable them to help residents
- Reviewing information that goes out to residents and businesses to make sure it is clear and easy to understand, for example letters, emails and information about highways, planning and other services
- Increasing transparency by making data and information accessible and share more of the data online

- Developing our channels of communication - for example establishing a residents e-newsletter, promoting the consultation portal

- Increasing the ability to take decisions about local issues within our neighbourhoods with resources.

LISTENING AND RESPONDING

We are willing to listen and be influenced and want to hear voices we don't normally hear. Feeding back on engagement and reasons for decisions by:

- Ensuring we reach groups whose voices we don't hear so often
- Supporting councillors to promote opportunities to get involved in local activities and decision-making
- Making sure we reach people who don't always have time to engage such as commuters and families

- Establishing more effective ways in which we can share feedback from residents that's shared with staff i.e. from libraries and other public facing services to help us improve what we do
- Providing feedback so people know what has happened as a result of their views - for example feeding back online, being clear how and when feedback will be used, including in committee reports.

ENGAGING AND SHARING

Sharing why we're engaging, helping everyone to engage and making it easy by:

- Working with communities to review how we engage and offer options in different languages, working with community leaders and the voluntary and faith sector
- Developing a programme that ensures there are opportunities to get involved in consultation and engagement activity and avoids duplication

- Supporting engagement with high profile communications to help raise awareness of how to get involved

TAKING TIME

Making sure everyone has enough time to engage by:

- Building sufficient time for meaningful engagement into the decision making timetable
- Ensuring people are given enough time to engage in individual consultations

CHANGING

We are willing to change and will support communities to lead change. We'll also explain why things have or haven't changed by:

- Providing feedback so people know what has happened as a result of their views
- Finding ways that enable communities to manage local budgets and services

- Ensuring engagement is carried out early in the process of reshaping services and managing issues so that decisions are informed by feedback

- Developing a crowdfunding option that helps communities raise funds.

LEARNING

We'll keep learning and trying new things to continually improve what we do by:

- Reviewing all activity so we can learn and improve
- Establishing measures for success at the start of activity
- Trying new tools and techniques to continually improve how we are engaging with people.

07

HOW WE WILL MEASURE WHETHER WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Reviewing progress against our plan and measuring what matters to our communities.



Involving people / Engaging and sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of people we've engaged and who have taken part in consultations Evidence of whether participants felt listened to Increase number of people reached with different demographic profiles Evidence of different forms of engagement used to reach specific communities Evidence of the different communities who have provided feedback
Being clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer complaints about how we engage and inform people - and more positive feedback Greater use of web (hits/heat maps) and less need for follow up questions
Listening and responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of activity we have implemented as a result of engagement - and things we have changed Engagement is included in decision making - evidenced through information in committee reports and co-design activity Monitor feedback from the annual residents survey on people feeling engaged, informed, satisfied, ability to influence
Taking time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations and engagement are publicised and scheduled in good time to enable people to engage Consultations run for enough time to enable people to respond
Changing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a toolkit to help with consistent standards for engagement and measure how often it has been used and develop as needed Evidence of ways we have helped to empower communities to lead change
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new initiatives tried - and review how they worked and learnings for future events New skills built across the council to deliver different ways of engaging

Our framework

ENGAGING WITH KINGSTON'S COMMUNITIES



GET INVOLVED

We are focusing on strengthening the relationship between the council and the community and want to involve you in the design of local services and the things that affect you most. To share your views visit kingstonletstalk.co.uk

 [kingston_council](https://www.instagram.com/kingston_council)

 [RBKingston](https://twitter.com/RBKingston)

 [@RBKingstonCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/RBKingstonCouncil)

 kingston.gov.uk

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