**Mossley Town Council Neighbourhood Plan**

**Draft Community Engagement Strategy**

**Introduction**

This Strategy has been prepared to help guide the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce an informed and relevant community-led Neighbourhood Development Plan for Mossley. It sets out a range of activities and actions that can be taken to draw information from the community in and around Mossley.

Effective engagement with local residents, community groups, businesses, and service providers in Mossley and adjoining areas is a crucial aspect in creating a well-informed plan and a sense of community ownership.

**What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

The Localism Act 2011 introduces statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and is intended to give communities more of a say in the development of their local area (within certain limits and parameters).

These plans will be used to decide the future of the places where people live and work giving opportunities to:

1. choose where people want new homes, shops and offices to be built
2. have a say on what new buildings should look like
3. grant planning permission (via the Local Planning Authority) for the new buildings you want to see go ahead.

Neighbourhood plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. This will mean that neighbourhood plans will have to take into account the local council’s assessment of housing and other development needs in the area.

However, it goes beyond traditional ‘land-use’ planning activity, which tends to focus on regulation and control of development. Neighbourhood planning allows greater scope for plan makers, acting with the community, relevant agencies and service providers to promote and manage change in an area. This is why we need to ensure that extensive, appropriate and well-planned engagement takes place at all stages of the plan-making process.

As with all plan-making, the project requires leadership. The Localism Act has given that leadership role to Parish and Town Councils.

We want people and organisations to contribute to discussion, debate and help set out the final plan. The plan we produce will not be a static document but will be reviewed from time to time and new ideas incorporated.

We wish to openly encourage opinions and suggestions from all individuals and organisations within the community whether or not these present potentially conflicting, challenging or critical views of the Plan or the process

Make efforts to understand all views expressed from all individuals and groups and respond clearly on all matters raised in a timely manner;

Demonstrate, in a form that is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community, how the Plan reflects the views and opinions expressed during each stage of engagement and, where those views cannot legitimately be taken into account, explaining why that is the case.

**Why do we need an Engagement Strategy?**

The Engagement Strategy is a way of explaining the steps we intend to take. It has been prepared to demonstrate from the start that this is a process that **needs** community involvement and that the community knows this.

It describes the processes and methods that may be employed in community engagement activity and presents a set of commitments to the community about how we will seek to inform, communicate with and involve them throughout the project.

In the past community led planning activities have tended to look at ways in which the community can *influence* service delivery to meet their needs and they have often been seen as aspirational. Neighbourhood plans are different, they;

1. Can show where development could or should take place to meet defined community needs based on an understanding of the ability of the private sector and other partners to provide that development; and
2. Will be prepared from the outset knowing that, provided certain steps are taken during their preparation, they will have clear legal status. This means that the Plan will have to be used to make decisions on all planning matters coming forward in Mossley and its adjoining areas (in relation to development proposals that may have a potential impact upon the Mossley area and its community).

**Timing.**

The timescale we have laid out will be subject to alterations due to external factors and the ability of consultees to form their comments, but also the need to adjust ourselves to what we report and any additional considerations which arise. The timescale is admittedly short, as others have found the process takes longer in practice than they first thought.

There are techniques we will bring forward to “parallel” themes as far as possible, without forgetting that issues often do not exist in isolation and we would not wish to compromise a line of plan development.

We will as far as possible take account of holidays and school timings etc.

**Who to consult?**

Typical stakeholders groups include:

1. Schoolchildren (aged 5-16)
2. Young people (aged 16 – 30)
3. Older groups
4. Commuters ( people living in the community but working outside)
5. Housing estate representatives
6. Community groups and societies
7. Single parent families
8. People with physical needs
9. People with learning needs
10. Faith groups
11. People employed in the community
12. Local businesses
13. Black and minority ethnic groups
14. Families
15. Migrant workers and new arrivals from overseas.
16. Voluntary bodies acting in the area

17. Farmers

18. Visitors/tourists

19. Landowners

20. Emergency services

21. Medical practitioners.

22. Local authorities including Tameside MBC and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

23. Schools

We will use a range of methods to engage and consult. We may use all or some of the below.

1. Self-completion questionnaires
2. Public meetings
3. Focus groups
4. Stakeholder seminars
5. Exhibitions
6. Ward councillor contact
7. Exhibition events
8. Questionnaires – ‘open’ questions
9. Stakeholder meetings
10. Forums – area, local, website
11. Community meetings
12. Workshop or group events
13. Open day events
14. Social Media – Facebook/Twitter
15. Planning for Real events

Care will be given to the suitability of each method so as not to deter participation and to facilitate clear answers and comments which can be used in individual or aggregated form. GDPR will apply to those who do not wish to have their names known. However for those to be valid a name and address must be supplied for the Town Council to consider them and to be included in the formal submissions as “confidential items”. Records of this will be maintained by the Town Council in accordance with GDPR.

Possible venues include:

1. Community centres
2. Schools
3. Pubs
4. Churches
5. Supermarkets
6. Library/other public buildings
7. On the street
8. Community/festival events
9. Clubs/society meeting rooms

**Themes**

It is expected that the consultation may break down into “themes”. This not only helps the process, the focus and the quality of consultation, but will enable the plan to take “non planning” matters, the overall and theme vision. How this works in practice will depend on the consultees and how it is planned.

There will be coordination element, set out and agreed by the Town Council so processes are clear and feed properly into the final thinking.

The Town Council will apply for funding to support the plan process, but will have due diligence on expenditure, extent and may prioritise to remain within budgets available from external sources and obligations to other areas of Town Council work.