

Oakham Town Centre Task and Finish Group: Communications and Community Engagement

1. Outline

This paper sets out a communications and engagement plan for the Oakham Task and Finish Group (TFG), following discussions at the last TFG meeting.

2. Background

An effective communications and engagement strategy will help form a vital connection between the TFG and the wider community as the TFG seeks to understand community-wide perceptions on the town centre, as part of its remit to gather evidence.

A communications and engagement strategy is important for a number of reasons. It would:

- Provide greater transparency on the work of the TFG and help keep people informed
- Provide a clear and consistent narrative for the work so that people are not receiving different messages from different people
- Convey the sense of partnership working that embodies the TFG
- Help provide evidence on perceptions and attitudes that affect usage of the town centre
- Involve the wider community in decision-making

3. The communications plan

It is suggested that an 'information hub' is created via Facebook for the TFG with the following components built in:

Component	Overview	Purpose	Actions required by TFG (if any)
Identity	Identity for the Oakham Task and Finish Group which includes logos and identity of partners	To show that the work of the TFG is led by a broad range of partners, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Oakham Town Council- Oakham Neighbourhood Plan- Oakham Town Partnership- Oakham Residents Group- OK2Way.- Rutland County Council	Agree the approach and supply logos
Introduction	Creation of an introduction to describe the work of the TFG and why it is important	Create a clearer understanding of its purpose.	Agree/provide feedback on the introduction as set out below
Membership	Biographies of people who make up the TFG	Create greater awareness of the people who sit on	(1) Write a 100-word max biography and

		the TFG and their backgrounds.	photo and send to Simon Jones at RCC Sjones@rutland.gov.uk
Information	Provide a link/update on components of work, including background documents	The Facebook page will ensure all existing strands of activity are linked so that people are able to better understand how they contribute to the gathering of evidence, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business survey - Town centre audit - Resident survey - Studies/reports 	
News	Regular updates from the TFG at milestones and after meetings	This will help underpin the drive and momentum behind the work	
Posts	Posts from members of the TFG	Members of the TFG could be invited to contribute content which underpins the importance of the work.	
Get involved	Promote/link opportunities for people to become involved in the work	To drive involvement from the wider community, including links to surveys.	

4. Communications delivery

The creation of the Facebook page would enable it to be promoted across all available channels in Rutland, including use of the TFG's existing channels. This is segmented below

Audience	Channel
All residents	Press releases to local newspapers and Rutland Radio at set milestones
	RCC's e-newsletter (5000)
	RCC's Facebook and Twitter feed
	Oakham Residents Group
	Oakham Neighbourhood Plan
	Oakham Town Partnership
Businesses	RCC's business e-newsletter
Wider stakeholders	RCC's stakeholder newsletter

5. Facebook content structure

- Introduction (About)
- Membership
- Meetings and minutes (linked to RCC's website)
- Terms of Reference
- Latest news (Timeline updates)
- Have your say (to be added at the launch of consultation activity).

6. Draft Facebook introduction

Oakham Task and Finish Group is a partnership group made up of representatives from across Oakham's community who are looking at ways to improve the town of Oakham.

The focus of the work will look at a range of issues, including place-shaping and access; planning and property; traffic and transport; community & culture; marketing and retail enhancement.

As part of the evidence gathering exercise there will be public engagement over the summer with residents, businesses and visitors.

The group, which meets monthly, was established by Rutland County Council's Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Board and is expected to report back on recommendations for town centre improvements in November 2018.

Membership of the group consists of representatives from within the community, businesses, representative organisations and councillors with an interest in the regeneration of Oakham.

7. Community engagement

TFG is asked to consider and agree community-wide engagement activity to supplement and support existing activity such as the Oakham Town Council business survey.

The aim of the engagement plan is to understand perceptions and attitudes that affect usage of the town centre from the point of view of residents and visitors.

The following intelligence could be useful to the TFG:

- What people use/don't use the town centre for
- How patterns of usage have changed and why
- What issues impact on usage
- What improvements would likely increase usage.

A draft integrated community engagement programme is set out below, with a draft survey to be agreed by TFG set out in Appendix A.

Component	Date/duration	Role of RCC	Role of TFG
Survey (town centre users; non-users /infrequent users; visitors to Rutland Water; businesses	Tuesday May 29 – July 8	Set up the surveys, available online and in print Publicise using the council and TFG channels/networks and via the Facebook page.	To promote/publicise the survey within their own networks. Conduct face-to-face interviews as determined by Research and Evidence Sub-Group incl. two visits to every business
TFG surgeries at Oakham Library	Every Saturday morning, from 10am to 12 noon from June 3 through to July 7 (this could follow-on from survey)	Set up the surgeries	Staff the surgeries (on a rota basis) and talk to residents while promoting the questionnaire.
TFG awareness sessions	Sessions outside Tesco/Co-Op asking people to complete the survey	Promotion of sessions	Staff the sessions
Stakeholder meetings - using consultation template	Throughout		Organise meetings with specific stakeholders as required (to be agreed by TFG).

Promotion of community engagement programmes

The following methods will be used

Method	Details	Audience	Resources
Press releases	Press releases targeted at local media (newspapers and radio)	All	RCC
Social media	Social media via RCC	All	RCC
E-newsletter	Monthly update via RCC's community	All	RCC

	newsletter (5,000 distribution)		
Posters	Posters in libraries and community centres	All	RCC
Letters/emails	Targeted letters and emails to specific groups	Stakeholders and businesses	TFG, using a script supplied by RCC

8. Governance

A TFG communications and engagement sub-group has been established to steer the work led by Nick Woodley and Paul Dowse, with support from RCC communications officer Simon Jones.

APPENDIX A

(LOGOS OF PARTNERS)

Oakham Task & Finish Group Town Centre Survey

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 <input type="checkbox"/> 66-75 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75
How often do you visit the town centre? (Please choose one option only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a Month <input type="checkbox"/> Once a Month or less <input type="checkbox"/> Infrequently <input type="checkbox"/> First Visit
On average, on a normal visit to the town centre how much money would you spend?	<input type="checkbox"/> Nothing <input type="checkbox"/> £0.01-£5.00 <input type="checkbox"/> £5.01-£10.00 <input type="checkbox"/> £10.01-£20.00 <input type="checkbox"/> £20.01-£50.00 <input type="checkbox"/> More than £50.00

What are the positive and negative aspects of the town centre? (Please tick all that apply)	
POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical appearance <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness <input type="checkbox"/> Retail offer –groceries <input type="checkbox"/> Retail offer –clothes, gifts etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Independent shops <input type="checkbox"/> National chains <input type="checkbox"/> Value for money <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service <input type="checkbox"/> Cafes/restaurants <input type="checkbox"/> Access to services- e.g. banks, Post Office, library <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural activities/ events <input type="checkbox"/> Pubs/ bars <input type="checkbox"/> Road links <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport <input type="checkbox"/> Ease of walking around the town centre <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience- e.g. near to where you live <input type="checkbox"/> Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Car parking <input type="checkbox"/> Market(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify).....
How long do you normally stay in the town centre?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than an hour <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 hours <input type="checkbox"/> All day <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify).....
Would you recommend a visit to the town centre?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What word would you use to sum-up Oakham Town Centre?	
How has the experience of Oakham Town Centre changed for you in recent years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> Changed with good & bad <input type="checkbox"/> Stayed the same <input type="checkbox"/> Worsened
What TWO suggestions would you make to improve the town centre?	
Please could you provide the first five digits of your home Post Code? e.g. LE15 x	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your views and opinions are appreciated.