



OVERVIEW

With the right tools, anything is possible. For Angus Council, which seeks to connect with residents across the wide expanse of this region — an area that stretches from mountain, glen, and sea, taking in the cliffs of Arbroath, the greens of Carnoustie, and even the realm of Peter Pan's Neverland — engagement means many things and happens via a range of mediums. As we'll see, the organisation has utilised the dynamic capabilities of Granicus's Sentiment & Feedback (EngagementHQ) to power its consultation and communication portal, using the power of the platform to help shape its wider ethos of engagement.

SITUATION | BUILDING A NEW FRAMEWORK

For Audrey Michie, service leader for Angus Council's Vibrant Communities team, achieving effective community engagement was not simply about identifying or implementing a new solution. "One of our main challenges," she explained "was that, as a council, we lacked the appropriate policies, tools and strategies to enable staff to effectively undertake their own engagement activities." Prior to adopting any new digital engagement platform, Angus undertook an exercise that looked beyond the organisation's use of technology, one that examined the foundation of its engagement policies.

As Audrey explains, "The last policy that had been in place at Angus Council was in 2001. Digital engagement just wasn't around in 2001. We started by engaging with staff on the development of a new policy framework." With this new framework in place, Angus Council was able to move forward with a fresh plan for community engagement, one that took into account how best to engage with residents all across this vast region.

As Audrey emphasises, "Angus Council's approach to engagement and consultation extends well beyond digital methods." For the organisation as a whole, engagement is understood as a comprehensive and inclusive process, with staff connecting with residents across the region through a range of approaches. "At Angus Council we have adopted the SCDC VOiCE engagement plan, to ensure all engagement and consultations are well planned."

MUST HAVE SOLUTION

Sentiment & Feedback

“We are a lot more consistent in approach now, and are reaching people that we didn't before.”

— Dianne Brand, Community Empowerment Support Officer, Angus Council



SOLUTION | A SYSTEM THAT EFFORTLESSLY SUPPORTS ENGAGEMENT

With community engagement of such paramount importance to the organisation, it was crucial that Angus had access to a system that was both easy to use and integrated well with any other in-house solutions. As the council was already a user of Granicus's Communications (govDelivery) platform, Sentiment & Feedback offered Angus seamless integration with this previously implemented Granicus solution. Additionally, the Sentiment & Feedback capabilities proved simple for staff to use, ensuring it was accessible to all across the organisation. But more than this – as Community Empowerment Support Officer Dianne Brand explains – the platform's 24-hour support and reporting functionality was one of the "key factors" to why it was selected by Angus as its engagement solution.

RESULTS | A CONSISTENT APPROACH, A FORUM FOR COMMUNICATION

Powered by Granicus's Sentiment & Feedback capability, the council's Engage Angus portal has been live since September 2023. In that time, it has brought a multitude of positive benefits to Angus Council and the residents it serves.

Commenting on how the platform is now furthering Angus' aims of engagement, Dianne explains, "We are more consistent in our approach and are reaching people that we didn't before." On the back of this, the team at Angus are capitalising on the platform's ability to generate statistics and data, something that is helping guide the council's overall engagement aims and goals. Additionally, the support and training received from Granicus during the portal's development and implementation phase not only ensured that staff can now use the platform with ease, but helped to allay concerns regarding both privacy policies and data collection.

Yet, as Audrey adds, the Engage Angus portal is also being used by the wider community and now serves as a medium for consultation between the organisation and its residents. With flexible, dynamic, and interactive features, which include forums and idea walls, residents can easily communicate with the council about any of its proposals. From the placement of glass recycling units to the selection of street names to reaching out a helping hand to those impacted by the devastating Brechin floods, Engage Angus is proving to be a helpful tool for creating an open dialogue between Angus Council and its people.

Dianne adds that, with officers interacting with residents both on and offline across the Angus region, Engage Angus has become a vector for engagement, with staff collecting data via a variety of methods to input into the platform, including via public meetings and drop-in sessions, all with a view to smoothly completing a wider circle of engagement.

But more than anything else, Angus' use of the Sentiment & Feedback solution exemplifies how this dynamic technology can ease the flow of communication between a council and those it serves. Yet, as a medium for engagement, it is part of a much wider story for Angus, one that shows that – with the right tools – anything is possible.