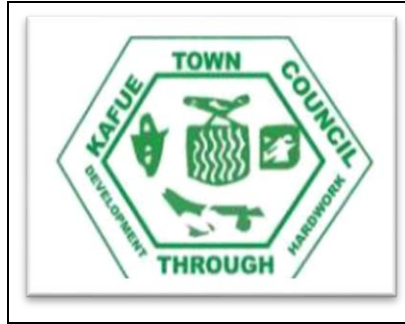


KAFUE TOWN COUNCIL



Citizen Engagement Strategy

(With a Focus on Output Based Budgeting and Project Implementation Management)

July 2025

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1. Introduction

Kafue District is one of the six (6) Districts in Lusaka Province with an area of approximately 4,471 square kilometres. Traversed by the Kafue River, from which it draws its name, and the Zambezi River, the District lies between the heights of 339 metres above sea level, to the south, and 1455 metres above sea level, to the north. It is located 40 kilometers south of Lusaka city, the capital of Zambia. The population for Kafue District is 219, 574. The District has sixteen (18) wards. The most populated wards are Chisankane and Shabusale. The Districts population currently stands at 219,574 people representing 64, 591 rural and 155,366 urban. The population by gender is represented as follows; 106,782 Male and 113,175 Females. The district has a population density of 49.11/km² and a growth rate of 5.2 percent.

In the realm of local governance, citizen engagement (CE) plays a critical role, particularly in the budgeting process. It enhances accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in government operations. Engaging citizens facilitates a deeper understanding of community needs, prioritizes local projects, and optimizes the allocation of public resources. This participatory approach not only empowers citizens but also strengthens their bond with local governance, ensuring they feel valued and heard.

Recognizing the necessity of fulfilling legal and policy obligations regarding citizen engagement, Kafue Town Council is committed to integrating these principles into its budgeting processes. Drawing from the provisions of the Local Government Act and the National Budgeting and Financial Management Act, the council endeavors to implement a collaborative budgeting approach that aligns with the aspirations of its constituents.

1.1 Background

Effective democratic governance hinges on robust citizen engagement, particularly in local-level budgeting. By actively involving citizens in decision-making, local authorities can ensure that public resources are allocated judiciously and in alignment with community priorities. The Kafue Town Council is poised to transform the budgeting process into a collaborative effort, reinforcing the significance of accountability and transparency.

Adhering to legal mandates outlined in the Local Government Act and the National Budgeting and Financial Management Act, Kafue Town Council has established this Citizen Engagement Strategy. This initiative is designed to empower citizens by facilitating their active participation in budgetary decisions while fostering a culture of accountability and responsiveness from local government

This document details a strategic plan aimed at enhancing citizen engagement, improving decision-making, and building trust between the Local Authority and the public. By prioritizing citizen involvement in the budgeting and project identification process, Kafue Town Council aspires to cultivate an inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance framework that truly reflects the interests of its community members.

1.2 Current Citizen Engagement Efforts by Kafue Council

Kafue Town Council has made significant strides in incorporating citizen engagement (CE) into its budgeting and project cycle processes. Some notable efforts include:

Public Consultations: The council has organized workshops and forums where citizens can voice their opinions on budget priorities and proposed projects.

Feedback Mechanisms: A structured platform for citizens to provide feedback on past budget implementations and suggest improvements has been established.

Collaboration with Community Leaders: Engaging traditional and community leaders has been instrumental in reaching a broader audience and gaining insights into the specific needs of various demographics, including marginalized groups.

Advantages/Benefits of Current Citizen Engagement Efforts

Enhanced Inclusivity: The council's efforts to involve diverse stakeholders, including women, people living with disabilities, and youth, have led to more comprehensive feedback and innovative ideas for local development.

Increased Transparency: Open discussions and accessible information regarding budget allocations have improved trust in government actions, reducing instances of misinterpretation or misinformation among citizens.

Empowered Community Participation: Citizens feeling empowered to participate actively in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership over local projects and initiatives.

Disadvantages/Gaps in Current Citizen Engagement Efforts

Limited Outreach: Despite efforts, some community members remain unaware of engagement opportunities. This indicates a gap in proactive outreach strategies.

Underrepresentation of Vulnerable Groups: While there have been attempts to involve marginalized communities, challenges still persist in ensuring effective participation from all sections of society.

Feedback Implementation: There have been instances where citizen feedback has not been adequately integrated into final decisions, leading to disillusionment among participants.

Contribution of the Citizen Engagement Strategy (CES)

The newly developed Citizen Engagement Strategy will build upon the existing efforts of the Kafue Town Council by:

Deliberately Expanding Target Groups: The CES will focus on reaching out to a wider audience, particularly vulnerable populations such as people living with disabilities, women, and marginalized youth, ensuring their voices are included in the budgeting process.

Improved Information Dissemination: By establishing more robust communication channels, the council will provide timely updates and information on budget developments, thereby keeping citizens well-informed.

Structured Feedback Mechanisms: The CES will emphasize integrating citizen input into decision-making processes, committing to transparency about how feedback has influenced budget allocations and project developments.

2. Vision, Aim and Objectives

2.1 Vision: An inclusive, industrialized, and diversified green economy offering an improved quality of life by 2034

- During the three (3) year duration of CES, each year will contain an annual implementation plan. Feedback from each year will be incorporated in the following year action plan and a full revision will be submitted at the beginning of the 3rd year of the CES implementation period.

2.2. Aim To promote Transparency, Accountability, and Citizen Participation in the Budgeting Process and execution of all community programs in the district. This plan outlines strategies for engaging citizens in the budgeting process and execution of all community programs in the district.

2.3 Objectives

- To Increase citizen awareness and understanding of the budgeting process and identification of community projects to be undertaken on a quarterly basis.
- To provide opportunities for citizens to contribute in the overall implementation process of all developmental activities in Kafue District.
- To Foster transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.

3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement

The Kafue Town council team will use the below stated initiatives for inclusive engagement taking into consideration that citizens are drawn from all the 18 wards. Consideration will be taken about how citizens will engage with civic leaders as well, to ensure that the process is not one sided. The citizen engagement process is on-going, hence the Councils intention to use different avenues and mechanisms to communicate with various stakeholders. Engagement methods will therefore include:

A. Citizen Participation in key Decision-Making and keeping citizens informed through the budget cycle:

- The presentation for the budget hearings will be presented ahead of time to stakeholders to obtain feedback including allocations to different programs/sub programs, key outputs, and selected projects;
- The CE in prioritizing projects will be strengthened to provide a good venue for informed consultation with WDCs;

B. Citizen Monitoring of Budget and Project Implementation

- CE in project implementation will be fostered via updated openings to engage citizens and local structures in monitoring project implementation;
- Improve reporting to citizens on the outputs of the budget implementation. This will be achieved using the following examples:
 - Use technology for real-time reporting on project progress;
 - Publish regular updates and reports;
 - Create accessible channels for concerns or feedback.
- Selected stakeholders will form part of the team as the council conducts monitoring visits.

4. Implementation Plan

Section content example is presented as follows:

The implementation plan of the CES will include the following:

1. Assessment of the current status of citizen engagement in the budget process and other relevant subject matters.
2. Identify engagement opportunities and develop a detailed outline of timelines and responsibilities. Example given in Table 1 below.
3. Outline the Stakeholders with reference to the level of and period of engagement with the council.

As displayed in table 2 below, the stakeholders to be engaged by the council may include citizens, Ward Development Committees (WDCs), Neighborhood Health Committees(NHCs), Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), government agencies at various levels, community organizations, Traditional and Community leaders, businesses, civil society groups, academic institutions, media outlets, and potentially affected groups within the community.

Table 1: Proposed Stakeholder Engagement Plan Summary Table

BUDGET STAGE	KEY FEATURES/ACTIVITIES	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY INVOLVED	TIMELINE
Preparation for budget formulation	i. Budget consultation meeting	WDCs, CWACs Business owners, NGOs, FBOs,other Government Institutions	Second Quarter
	ii. LAs provide WDCs with a list of proposed projects for consideration in this budget cycle as well as a list of ongoing projects and completed projects for the past 2 years.	WDCs	Second quarters
	iii. Using the project lists provided, communities may accept or reject project proposals and make their own proposals for development projects and activities for their Wards to be included in the budget based on their priorities	WDCs	Second quarter
	iv. LAs produce a summarized stakeholder report from all Wards and submit report to MLGRD.	Kafue Town Council	Third quarter
	v. Conduct budget hearings & Town Hall meetings.	WDCs, CWASs Business owners, NGOs, FBOs,other Government Institutions	Third quarter
	vi. The Council Secretary shall present the reports to the full council.	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs,other Government Institutions	Second quarter
	vii. Feedback meetings to WDCs on what projects and activities have been included in the budget	Kafue Town Council	Fourth quarter

	iii. Reports including minutes must be submitted to the PLGOs office for review and consolidation for onward submission to MLGRD.	Kafue Town Council	Fourth quarter
	ix. MLGRD will submit the consolidated reports to MoFNP.	MLGRD	Fourth quarter
Budget approval (public awareness of budget details)	i. Review the proposed budget and assess whether input from community, especially vulnerable groups i.e. women, PWDs and children has been incorporated.	MLGRD and MoFNP	Fourth quarter
	ii. Feedback to WDCs and other stakeholders of the final approved budget	Kafue Town Council	Fourth quarter
Budget execution and monitoring (for transparency in budget implementation)	i. Track the effective utilisation of funds in line with planned activities.	Director Finance, Director Social Planning, Economic Planners	First quarter following year
	ii. Report back on a regular basis to WDCs on implementation of activities and projects	Social Planners Economic	First quarter following year
Budget evaluation and Review	i. Evaluate the impact of allocated funds, focusing on agreed upon programmes with a bias towards gender, persons with disabilities, child-related and climate change outcomes.	Kafue Town Council	First quarter following year

5. Communication Plan

Section Content Comments:

- Describes information dissemination by the council to create awareness over the CES and its contents.
- It outlines details of different avenues to announce meeting details such as timing.
- Should also include Grievance Redress Mechanism component to capture feedback from citizens.

Table 2: Proposed Communication Plan Summary

DELIVERABLE/ ACTIVITY	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PROPOSED TIMELINE/ DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNICATION METHOD	COMMENTS
Public Meeting	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	Twice a year	August	Public Relations Officer	Invitation Letters	
Budget Hearings	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	once	September	Public Relations Officer, Director Finance, Director Planning	Meeting	
Surveys and Questionnaires	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	once	August	Public Relations Officer, Social Economic Planner, IT	Interaction Link	
Social media and Radio Programme	Whole District	yearly	August	Public Relations Officer	Facebook Page, WhatsApp, Radio Station	
Citizen Budget Committees	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	once	September	Social Economic Planner	Invitation Letter, Meeting	

6. Budget (for the Implementation of the CE Process)

The implementation of the Citizen engagement process for Kafue District will be funded under the 2025 approved budget as well as with the support from the World bank.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluating the Citizen Engagement implementation will be very key. Kafue Town will therefore employ the following mechanizes to assess the progress of the CE achievements;

Participation Rates: Track participation rates in public meetings, budget hearings, and surveys.

Citizen Feedback: Collect and analyze citizen feedback to assess the effectiveness of engagement strategies.

Budget Outcomes: Monitor budget outcomes to ensure that citizen input is reflected in budget allocations. The Council is commitment to give feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of the Community Engagement Strategy (CES) underscores the council's dedication to fostering citizen engagement within the framework of democratic governance. This initiative not only reflects an appreciation for public participation but also aims to streamline a process that has often been fragmented, leading to inefficiencies in public spending. By systematizing citizen involvement, the CES creates a cohesive approach that enhances collaboration between government entities and the community, ultimately paving the way for people-centered development.

Moreover, this strategy embodies a firm commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in the budgeting and project implementation processes. By ensuring that diverse voices are heard and valued, the council demonstrates its resolve to create a governance model that truly represents the interests of all citizens. Transparency in decision-making will foster trust and encourage community members to engage wholeheartedly, while accountability mechanisms will ensure that resources are managed responsibly and effectively.

As we move forward with the CES, it is imperative to recognize that empowered citizens are crucial to the success of any democratic system. Through this strategy, the council is not only enhancing public service delivery but also cultivating a more informed and engaged populace, ready to contribute to the collective well-being of our community.

Annex

[Relevant Templates will be jointly selected from the CES guidelines. These may include: Attendance list, Stakeholder minutes, Budget Hearing Presentation, Zonal and Ward project sheet, Monitoring sheets and others relevant to the LA.]