

# Scrutiny Report



## Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

### Part 1

Date: 15 November 2018

### Subject **Public Engagement Review**

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Area / Role / Subject
Rhys Cornwall	Head of People and Business Change
Tracy McKim	Policy, Partnership and Involvement Manager

## Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

### 1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked

1. To consider how the Council engages with the Citizens of Newport, and how effective this engagement is.
2. To decide whether it wishes to make comment or recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

### 2 Context

#### Background

- 2.1 The review was undertaken to establish the Council's engagement and consultation arrangements against current requirements, feedback from Scrutiny and other work and good practice examples and make recommendations for development.
- 2.2 The report has been created partly in response to Scrutiny's comments and recommendations regarding the council's public engagement and consultation for the annual budget 2018/19 (2.3) and City Centre PSPO (2.4), and partly in response to the legislative requirement to involve stakeholders in decisions that may affect them in the future.

## Previous consideration of this item

2.3 The comments and recommendations made relating to the annual budget consultation, made on [February 1 2018](#), were responded to by Officers at the Committee's meeting on [July 26 2018](#).

The Members asked the following:

- The Committee had previously been told that a review of Public Engagement would be brought back to the Committee in November. The Committee raised concerns that this would be too late to impact upon the process for this year's budget, and as such were concerned that the timescale meant that the Council would not have sufficient time to properly engage on this year's budget. The Officer acknowledged that an earlier start to the public consultation, or a year round process of consultation would be preferable, however the decisions on the timing of the budget process was a corporate decision based on a number of factors, and had to be met from within its resources. The Officers team resources this year had focused on the implementation of the Wellbeing Assessment.
- The Officer advised the Committee that the concerns raised at last year's budget Consultation by Scrutiny were being addressed and that a review of Public Engagement was being undertaken. This full review was being reported to the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 November to look at the longer term approach to consultation.
- The Committee were offered more frequent progress updates every meeting until November to keep them informed.
- The Members commented that the reasons why public consultation had not progressed from last year then this needed to be understood, whether it be staff resources within the team, or part of a more strategic decision. Some Committee Members noted that the Committee could make recommendations to the Cabinet to start the consultation process earlier.
- Members commented on how it was disappointed that the Council had not improved in the Hierarchy of Engagement. The Involve stage needed to be reached and it had been thought consulting on the Budget would be a good opportunity. The public consultation could not be restricted by the budget cycle, but there were issues that can be consulted throughout the year. The Belle Vue Park Car Parking was given as an example by a Member. People could be consulted on whether free parking in parks or a small rise in Council Tax was preferable.
- Comment was then made that the Council had not taken advantage of some opportunities. An example was given that Welsh Government offered a sum of money to be applied for by Local Authorities so they could liaise with local businesses to allow the public to use their toilets however the Council had not applied. The Officer acknowledged that this opportunity had not been taken up. The Officer advised that it was a challenge to move up the Hierarchy of Engagement as it was difficult to change the culture and mind-set to enable this to happen. The arrangements for this year's budget consultation were being developed, and pre consultation engagement ideas were being looking into, such as Hereford Council's method of engagement.
- Concerns were raised regarding the Council moving away from paper surveys as an engagement tool. Members were advised that paper surveys required a member of staff to manually input responses which was an additional resource requirement. However, paper copies would still be available, and the Council was not moving away from this method of engagement. Last year both paper and face to face surveys were produced and included in the overall data.
- It was also asked if it would be better if the Budget Consultation could be tailored in a way that people could choose which questions and areas that they wished to provide opinion on.

- Members then suggested that links to the survey could be given to those directly impacted such as parents at schools and library users if those were to be affected by the budget. Members were told that this could be considered, Officers also stated that the previous survey was overcomplicated, when the information needed to be balanced and clear.
- The Officer advised that the figures around the impact the bus WIFI had could be provided to the Committee. There were around 150,000 unique sign-ons using the bus WIFI, which asked users five questions around consultation and engagement. However the bus WIFI was not able to provide sufficient data to base a budget consultation on. The bus WIFI had been used last year in the budget consultation to raise awareness and to find out if people would complete the consultation or not. 45% of people said they would not respond to budget consultations.
- Members were told that the times that had the best results were when survey questions were asked in a face to face, one to one setting, an example was given from last year when a day was spent in the Market talking to people about the budget. The Market session discussed the budget proposals with around 40 people responding to questions. This brought in better quality data, however it was resource intensive.

### **3 Information Submitted to the Committee**

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the report on public engagement provided by the Head of People and Business change.

The public engagement structured into the following areas for consideration:

- **Purpose**
- **Background**
- **Rationale for the review**
- **Our 'offer' – the support and resources currently available**
  - One Newport Engagement Group
- **Our Reach – how successful is this?**
  - Public perception of Council engagement
  - Response rates
  - Demographic and representativeness
  - Wellbeing Plan consultation
  - Newport Youth Council
  - Year round engagement process
  - Communications and message
- **Moving forwards and consulting to involvement**
- **Conclusions and recommendations**

## 4. Suggested Areas of Focus

### Role of the Committee

**The role of the Committee in considering the report is to consider:**

- Consider the how stakeholders are involved in the Council's decision making process into the Council's consultation processes.
- The extent to which the report cover considers all aspects of public engagement that the Council undertake.
- Consider whether any areas require improvements / development in terms of how the Council engages;
- Consider whether any areas of the public engagement require further exploration by the Committee;
- Decide whether is wishes to make any comments or recommendation to the Cabinet Member on the public engagement.

## Section B – Supporting Information

### 5 Supporting Information

5.1 The following links are to public engagement best practice guides and manuals:

- [Practitioners' Manual for Public Engagement](#) from Participation Cymru
- [Public Engagement Toolkit](#) from National Assembly for Wales
- [The Evaluation Toolkit](#) from Participation Cymru
- [How to... .. evaluate public engagement projects and programmes](#) from National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

5.2 The above guides, manuals and toolkits provide an insight into public engagement best practice. The reports outline the following overall points of best practice;

- Ensure that engagement is effectively designed to make a difference;
- Encourage and enable all people affected to be involved, if they choose to be;
- Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way;
- Work in relevant partnerships;
- Information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable;
- Make it easier for people to take part;
- Enable people to take part effectively;
- Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective;
- People are told the impact of their contribution (feedback);
- Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement.

## 6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Public Engagement has intrinsic links to all of the Councils policies and priorities, these links should be highlighted by the Officers in the reports or through questioning at the Meeting:

<b>Well-being Objectives</b>	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
<b>Corporate Plan Commitments</b>	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
<b>Supporting Function</b>	Modernised Council			

## 7 Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

The Committees role is to consider how the report demonstrates how the Council is demonstrating it is working in accordance with the 5 ways of working within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Under this act, there is a duty on public bodies to 'involve' stakeholders in improving their own and their community's wellbeing.

### 5 Ways of working

<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <p><i>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs</i></p>
<p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p><i>How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives</i></p>
<p><b>Integration</b></p> <p><i>Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies</i></p>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p><i>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives</i></p>
<p><b>Involvement</b></p> <p><i>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</i></p>

## 8. Background Papers

- [Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 1 February 2018](#)
- [Overview and Scrutiny management Committee – 26 July 2018](#)
- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)