



NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

Participation Strategy

2022-2026



FOREWORD

I am very pleased to present this first Participation Strategy in accordance with the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021.

Newport City Council is committed to the principle of participative decision-making, and supporting residents to be actively involved in democratic processes.

This commitment to engaging with communities is captured in the strategy, and reflected in the actions taken to be open and responsive to the needs of citizens.

We have recently made major investments in participatory approaches through a commitment to participatory budgeting, which will empower citizens and community organisations to support projects that will address the impacts of Covid-19. In recent years we have been at the forefront of using Wi-Fi technology on local buses to widen our engagement reach and have now introduced a similar system in our public buildings.

We have a strong record of working in partnership, often in challenging circumstances, demonstrating the benefits of close collaboration, and focus on achieving long-term improvements in the well-being of our communities.

We are making our democratic processes more transparent and accessible. This includes publishing a guide to the constitution and implementing the facilities needed for Councillors to access Council meetings from any location. This will create greater flexibility in democratic participation and encourage residents to consider representing their communities as elected councillors.

This strategy affirms the Council's dedication to listening to and collaborating with residents, and aims to further empower citizens and communities to have their say on what matters for their local area.

CLlr Jane Mudd
Council Leader, Newport City Council



INTRODUCTION

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, local authorities in Wales must publish a Participation Strategy that sets out the ways in which local people are encouraged to participate in decision-making by the council.

This Strategy complements the Public Engagement Strategy that was approved and adopted by the Scrutiny Improvement Group in 2015 and updated in 2017. As public participation is a challenging aspect of council business, it is expected that this strategy will evolve and improve over time as the benefit of experience and good practice becomes evident, and new technologies become available.

This strategic plan outlines Newport City Council's priorities for encouraging participation in decision making. The strategy runs for four years, beginning in 2022 and finishing in 2026. In this strategy we have tried to clarify how our participation objectives will make a real difference to how we engage with people in Newport. Within each objective, we have identified clear outcomes we are working towards, and a number of actions that will contribute to us achieving those outcomes. You can also see how we will engage with different groups.

The objectives of the strategy will underpin the service plans in each area of the Council. Performance against service plans will be reviewed as part of the existing governance arrangements, via Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet. Scrutiny of performance takes place at mid-year and end of year.



OUR PARTICIPATION DUTIES AND RELATED POLICIES

We aim to be open and responsive to the needs of citizens and communities. This includes engaging local people in participative processes, by which residents can influence and shape policy and services.

Participation is about sharing decisions with those affected by them, and must be an integral part of our work. It is not about giving groups or individuals whatever they ask for and generally happens within constraints, including welfare and money. Residents should, however, always have a degree of decision-making power so that they feel listened to and understood. We aim to always say what we plan to do as a result of hearing residents views, and why.

Participation supports residents to be 'actively involved with policy makers and service planners from an early stage of policy and service planning and review'.

Participation can include a wide range of different methods and techniques, and may be prompted by the Council, or by residents.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a number of duties on local authorities regarding participation. These are to;

-  **Promote awareness of the functions the Council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors.**
-  **Share information about how to go about becoming an elected Member, or Councillor, and what the role of Councillor involves.**
-  **Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the Council.**
-  **Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the Council, including comments, complaints and other types of representations.**
-  **Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to Councillors.**

Relevant legislation and policy

- o Corporate Plan
- o One Newport Engagement and Participation Strategy
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 (newport.gov.uk)
Have your say (newport.gov.uk)
- o Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- o WG Equalities and Inclusion Programme
Welsh Government – Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
Welsh Government (note, Assembly as of report) Diversity in Local Government Survey, Nov 2018
Action Plan: Year 1 - 2020-2021 - Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments in Wales (2020-2023) (gov.wales)
- o UN Rights of the Child Convention (Article 12, respect for the views of the child)
UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf (unicef.org.uk)
- o Participation Cymru – National Principles for Public Engagement
- o Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 - (sets duties to involve children and young people in decisions which affect them)
- o National Participation Standards in Wales – (with respect to the participation of children and young people)
Engagement - WCVA
- o Involve – Public Participation Research
What is the impact of participation? | involve.org.uk

OUR OBJECTIVES



Promote awareness of the functions the Council carries out to local residents, businesses and visitors.

Aim	What we already have in place to build on;	Actions	Measures
<p>This objective is aimed at sharing information about the Council's functions and services so that residents are informed. Sharing information about the Council's functions supports the public to digest and explore information before they may be asked to give their opinion or recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan and associated strategies that are publicly available • Council website • Modern.Gov - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions • Newport Matters newsletter which is sent to all households in Newport and available online • Live streaming of Council meetings that can be viewed by the public. Agendas and minutes can be accessed online. • Council Meetings • Cabinet Meetings • Budget Consultations • Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing a Guide to the Democratic Process • Improving the Council website so that it is easier to access information • Ensuring that the council's forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of views of meetings inc. live and You Tube • Website traffic data • Satisfaction survey on the website



2.



Share information about how to go about becoming an elected Member, or Councillor, and what the role of Councillor involves.

Aim	What we already have in place to build on;	Actions	Measures
<p>This objective is focussed on encouraging people to become Councillors, representing the people in their own community and making decisions on their behalf. It is important that Councillors are like the people who elect them, so that they can represent all the different views in the community and take decisions that benefit everyone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website; Council and Democracy pages • Become a Councillor page www.newport.gov.uk/en/Council-Democracy/Become-a-councillor/Become-a-councillor.aspx • Full training curriculum to support Members are induction and throughout term • Regular Members Seminars to ensure Members are updated and engaged on developments • Allowances for Members posted on Council website • Strategic Equality Plan and objectives; Leadership, Governance and Involvement 'Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement • Role Descriptions for Members as part of the Constitution • The Council's website includes information about being a Councillor, including links to further information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing hybrid meetings that allow Councillors to attend and participate in Council meetings from any location with an internet connection • Ensuring that information for potential councillors is available and fit for purpose; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities and diversity data for elected Members

