



**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



## Corporate Plan



## One Newport Engagement and Participation Strategy

> [Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 \(newport.gov.uk\)](#)

> [Have your say \(newport.gov.uk\)](#)



## Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

> [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)



## 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 - 2020-21 - Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments in Wales](#)



## UN Rights of the Child Convention (Article 12, respect for the views of the child)

> [UNCRC summary-1 | 1.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)



## Participation Cymru – National Principles for Public Engagement



## Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

(sets duties to involve children and young people in decisions which affect them)



## National Participation Standards in Wales

(with respect to the participation of children and young people)

> [Engagement - WCVA](#)



## Involve – Public Participation Research

> [What is the impact of participation? | involve.org.uk](#)

# Our Objectives

## I. 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"> <li>• Corporate Plan and associated strategies that are publicly available</li> <li>• Council website</li> <li>• Modern.Gov - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions</li> <li>• Newport Matters newsletter which is sent to all households in Newport and available online</li> <li>• Live streaming of council meetings that can be viewed by the public. Agendas and minutes can be accessed online.</li> <li>• Council Meetings</li> <li>• Cabinet Meetings</li> <li>• Budget Consultations</li> <li>• Social Media</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing a Guide to the Democratic Process</li> <li>• Improving the council website so that it is easier to access information</li> <li>• Ensuring that the council's forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of views of meetings inc. live and You Tube</li> <li>• Website traffic data</li> <li>• Satisfaction survey on the website</li> </ul> |



## 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"> <li>• Website; Council and Democracy pages</li> <li>• Become a Councillor page <a href="http://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Council-Democracy/Become-a-councillor/Become-a-councillor.aspx">www.newport.gov.uk/en/Council-Democracy/Become-a-councillor/Become-a-councillor.aspx</a></li> <li>• Full training curriculum to support Members are induction and throughout term</li> <li>• Regular Members Seminars to ensure Members are updated and engaged on developments</li> <li>• Allowances for Members posted on council website</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Role descriptions for Members as part of the Constitution</li> <li>• The council's website includes information about being a Councillor, including links to further information</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing hybrid meetings that allow Councillors to attend and participate in council meetings from any location with an internet connection</li> <li>• Ensuring that information for potential Councillors is available and fit for purpose;</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equalities and diversity data for elected Members</li> </ul> |



# 3.

## Provide greater access to information about decisions that have been made, or that will be made by the council.

| Aim   | What we already have in place to build on;  | Actions   | Measures   |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>This objective is about encouraging and enabling everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose. People affected by an issue or change are included in opportunities to engage as an individual or as part of a group or community, with their views both respected and valued.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Modern.Gov - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions</li> <li>• Consultation and surveys</li> <li>• Newport Matters newsletter which is sent to all households in Newport and available online</li> <li>• One Newport partnership Bulletin provides regular updates to enable transparency, engagement and involvement</li> <li>• The council uses data to inform proposals, including data from external sources and partners where appropriate.</li> <li>• The council works closely with partners to share information about decisions and engage with residents more effectively.</li> <li>• The council works with community groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and a range of viewpoints are heard.</li> <li>• The council uses mechanisms to engage with disadvantaged groups and equalities interests e.g. 50+ Forum, Newport Youth Council, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic forums, disability groups etc.</li> <li>• The council routinely engages with citizens on key corporate decisions e.g. the budget and medium term financial plan</li> <li>• The council has regular mechanisms to engage with the public including: the citizens panel, bus wi-fi survey technology and public building wifi technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to move towards participative approaches to engagement which empower citizens and place decision making in the hands of communities and individuals e.g. participatory budgeting exercises.</li> <li>• Build on the use of technology to increase the reach of engagement activity e.g. using public wi-fi to promote surveys.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of views of meetings inc. live and You Tube</li> <li>• Participation rates in consultations and surveys</li> <li>• Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (National Survey for Wales and local data)</li> </ul> |





## 4. Provide and promote opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the council, including petitions, comments, complaints and other types of representations.

| Aim   | What we already have in place to build on;  | Actions  | Measures   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>This objective focusses on participation, which is much more than getting people's views on a specific issue. Participation is about encouraging people to take part in community and political activities using different approaches and methods of engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Digital forms</li> <li>• Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy</li> <li>• Consultation and surveys</li> <li>• Newport Matters newsletter which is sent to all households in Newport and available online. This includes information about consultations, surveys and how to get in touch with the council to give feedback.</li> <li>• Modern.Gov - democracy section of website where residents can access the agendas and minutes of meetings, or look up decisions</li> <li>• One Newport partnership facilitates feedback and input from the Citizen's Panel, with children and young people and the general public.</li> <li>• The council works with community groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and a range of viewpoints are heard.</li> <li>• Petition Scheme (to be developed)</li> <li>• Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petition scheme; needs to be developed</li> <li>• Regularly reporting on comments received from residents</li> <li>• Developing a better understanding of the demographics of residents who regularly provide feedback, so that any gaps in representation can be identified.</li> <li>• Review and update the Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy particularly with respect to hybrid meetings.</li> <li>• Progress against the Strategy will be reported through the council's Annual Self Assessment Report</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of comments, compliments and complaints received</li> <li>• Participation rates in consultations and surveys</li> <li>• No. of viewers of online meetings</li> <li>• Monitor equalities and diversity data concerning residents who have provided feedback</li> <li>• Level of participation and engagement in the scrutiny process;</li> <li>• levels of responses to consultation</li> <li>• no. of views of meetings including live and YouTube</li> </ul> |



# 5.

## Promote awareness of the benefits of using social media to communicate with residents to Councillors.

| Aim  | What we already have in place to build on;  | Actions  | Measures   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>This objective recognises that Social media has become an important public space, a place where councillors share political information and engage with other councillors, support officers and residents. Social media has the potential to improve democracy by facilitating bigger, freer and more open conversations and by allowing representatives to communicate directly with citizens. While social media can be a helpful tool for engagement, alternative methods of communication including are also valid.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media channels</li> <li>• Welsh Local Government Association - Guidance for New Councillors - 'Improving Digital Citizenship – Research and Best Practice'</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Induction and Training</li> <li>• Member Seminars</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % completion of training modules</li> <li>• % attendance at Members Seminars</li> </ul> |



# Partnership Arrangements

**One Newport is the city's Local Delivery Group where local public, private and third sector organisations work together to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the city.**

Public Service Boards (PSBs) were originally established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ([Shared Purpose: Shared Future](#)) and work with the sustainable development principle and achievement of the seven well-being goals, however since the move to a Gwent Regional PSB, One Newport has been reconstituted as a Local Delivery Group tasked with local coordination of public services and delivery of the wellbeing agenda.

The sustainable development principle takes into account the five ways of working that public bodies need to show that they applied the principle.

Membership includes representatives of private, public and voluntary sector organisations in Newport and the wider region.

One Newport is committed to actively seeking the views and opinions of residents about all policies and decisions made, and about how we can make improvements in the future. To support One Newport to take a joined-up approach to engagement and to encourage local communities to take part, a One Newport Engagement and Participation Strategy had been produced.

Involve Newport is the name for a panel of Newport residents who receive regular surveys with the aim to represent the views and opinions of the people within the city. The panel was established by Newport City Council in 2002 and is now used jointly with the council's partners through One Newport.

The aim of the panel is to provide a platform through which residents' views on local services can be accurately gauged. It also gives us the opportunity to understand why people's views are changing and provide opportunities for more focussed research about specific services.

The panel currently has around 700 members and anyone living in Newport has the opportunity to join, including young people. Members are sent around four questions during the year and are asked for their opinions and suggestions on current services affecting the city and its residents.

Further information about [One Newport](#) and how the information collected from surveys is used to support and develop policy and improve services can be found [here](#).



# Outcome of Consultation

## (Related to Strategy)

Consultation was carried out as part of the development of this plan. While results from our different consultation exercises suggested that people felt we were focusing on the right equality objectives, with **45.4% of people agreeing with our draft objectives**, they also gave us a clear steer on how we could look to improve our services.

“

**Be visible, research the residents in your authority area, ask them what matters to them.**

*Consultation Respondent*

”



“

**Simpler plain English guides to how the council decision making process works.**

*Consultation Respondent*

”



“

**Consultation with children,  
young people and the  
public linked to strategic  
documents.**

*Consultation Respondent*

”

“

**Having alternative methods  
of consultation to be  
explored, online focus  
groups, using social media to  
ask questions through polls  
will allow a greater response  
to issues that affect all.**

*Consultation Respondent*

”



“

**Make it easier to find  
information online.**

*Consultation Respondent*

”



# Definitions:

These working definitions are informed by 'Practitioners' Manual for Public Engagement' (Participation Cymru, 2012).



## Engagement:

An active and participative process by which people can influence and shape policy and services that includes a wide range of different methods and techniques.



## Consultation:

A formal process by which policy makers and service providers ask for the views of interested groups and individuals.



## Participation:

People being actively involved with policy makers and service planners from an early stage of policy and service planning and review.



# Further Information



**Petition Scheme**



**Guide to the Democratic Process (to be developed)**



**Scrutiny Public Engagement Strategy**



**Newport City Council – Have Your Say Consultation Page**



**Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy**



**Contact your Local Councillor**





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