

# Draft Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-2024

## Consultation report

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## 1. Overview

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 is being developed to demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which came into force on 6 April 2011.

Building on our previous equalities work the Plan will explain to residents, our workforce, elected members and stakeholders how Bridgend County Borough Council will deliver its equalities commitments whilst continuing to be an inclusive and effective organisation that is representative of our community and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are outlined below:

### Public Sector Equality Duty

#### The General Duty

When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

#### The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions the Council must take in order to comply and include the following areas:

- Setting Equality Objectives and publishing a **Strategic Equality Plan**;
- Ensuring it engages with people who have an interest in how the Council's decisions affect them;
- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty;
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact on the Council's identified;
- Publish employment monitoring information annually;

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst its employees and use its performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of its employees in relation to the General Duties;
- Set a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified;
- Think about including conditions relevant to the General Duty in its procurement processes.

The purpose of this consultation was to outline the overarching objectives which will then enable BCBC to develop an action plan to support these objectives. A public consultation was undertaken over a six week period from 23 December 2019 to 9 February 2020.

The consultation received 647 responses from a combination of the consultation survey (424 survey responses), four public engagement events in libraries, one Citizens' Panel event and attendance at nine equality group meetings which included a total of 220 attendees and 3 social media comments. This paper details the analysis associated with the consultation.

## 2. Introduction

A public survey based on Bridgend County Borough Council's Draft Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-2024 was completed over a six week period between 23 December 2019 and the 9 February 2020. The survey was available to complete online on the consultation page of the council's website and paper copies were made available upon request. The survey was available in English and Welsh and an accessible and easy read version was available in both languages. Residents could request a paper copy or another alternative format by telephone or email via the Consultation and Engagement Team.

In total, there were eight questions which required a reply from respondents. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey, this is recommended good practice for all public facing surveys carried out by the council.

The content of the consultation remains available online in closed consultations.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via social media, letter, email and phone call.

## 3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

This section details the specific communications and engagement methods used to reach people and encourage them to share their views during the consultation period.

### 3.1 Social media and online

Facebook and Twitter have been widely used to promote the consultation.

Information was posted to the council's corporate Twitter accounts throughout the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the

proposals. The council currently has 12,110 followers on its corporate Twitter accounts. During the period, the authority 'tweeted' 21 times and the information was seen by 18,928 people.

Information was also posted to the council's corporate Facebook page during the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals. The council currently has 12,426 followers. During the period, the authority posted once on Facebook and the post was seen by 4,196 people.

### **3.2 Local press**

Details of the consultation were sent as part of press releases emailed to local and national press in advance of the consultation (19 December 2019) and supported with social media messages throughout the live period.

### **3.3 Community engagement/meetings/events**

Local community, equality and diversity groups were given details of the consultation proposals and told how to share their views.

#### **3.3.1 Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum**

The Consultation and Engagement Team presented the consultation to the Bridgend Community Cohesion and Equality Forum on 20 January 2020. Members of the forum were able to complete the consultation using clicker pads. Details of the consultation were shared with all members via email.

#### **3.3.2 Citizens' Panel event**

All Citizens' Panel members were given the opportunity to attend an event in Civic Offices, Bridgend. 23 Citizens' Panel members attended the event where they were able to complete the consultation using clicker pads in the council Chamber on 17 January 2020.

#### **3.3.3 Public engagement sessions**

Four public engagement sessions were held in partnership with our partners Awen in local libraries across the county borough. Sessions took place in:

- Pencoed Library
- Porthcawl Library
- Maesteg Library
- Bridgend Life Centre

#### **3.3.4 Equality groups**

The Consultation and Engagement Team attended community events and provided paper surveys to groups across the county borough including:

- Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People
- SHOUT Bridgend
- SHOUT Porthcawl
- OAP club
- Young carer group
- Bridgend carers café
- Youth LGBTQ group
- BridgeVis

Attendees were supported by the Consultation and Engagement Team to complete the consultation at these events.

### **3.4 The draft strategic equality objectives 2020-2024 survey**

The online and paper surveys contained seven questions which required a reply from respondents.

The survey was available on the council's website and was sent to all 1387 Citizens' Panel members in the format of their choice.

Surveys were readily available in English and Welsh as well as large print and easy read versions in both languages. Alternative formats were available on request.

## 4. Response rate

In total, there were 647 interactions, representing 0.5 per cent of the Bridgend County Borough population. The response rate has been divided into several areas including: consultation survey responses, face to face interactions and social media interactions:

- We received 424 survey responses in total (275 online submissions and 149 paper versions);
- During the consultation period, there were three comments on our social media channels;
- The Consultation and Engagement team engaged with 220 residents from across the county borough in a series of community engagement events.

## 5. How effective was the consultation?

The social demographic data reflects a good cross section of the county borough's population, all respondents lived in the county borough.

The data collection methods, which include the online survey, a paper survey and an easy read and large print survey, were all developed using plain English to maximise understanding. These response methods were designed to give a consistency to the survey across multiple platforms.

## 6. Headline figures

- 6.1 Overall 95% of respondents agreed with the objective for education. 75% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 20% agreed;
- 6.2 Overall 83% of respondents agreed with the objective for work. 51% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 32% agreed;
- 6.3 Overall 87% of respondents agreed with the objective for living standards. 51% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 36% agreed;
- 6.4 Overall 92% of respondents agreed with the objective for health and wellbeing. 62% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 30% agreed;
- 6.5 Overall 94% of respondents agreed with the objective for safety and respect. 70% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 24% agreed;
- 6.6 Overall 91% of respondents agreed with the objective for participation. 55% of respondents strongly agreed with the objective and a further 36% agreed.

## 7. Question and analysis - consultation survey

Section seven of the report looks at the questions asked in the consultation survey – with 424 respondents in total.

### 7.1 Language to complete the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked in which language they would like to complete the survey. Overall, 99.3% of respondents selected English with 0.7% selecting Welsh.

Language	#	%
English	421	99.3
Welsh	03	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 7.2 Draft Strategic Equality objectives 2020-2024 survey

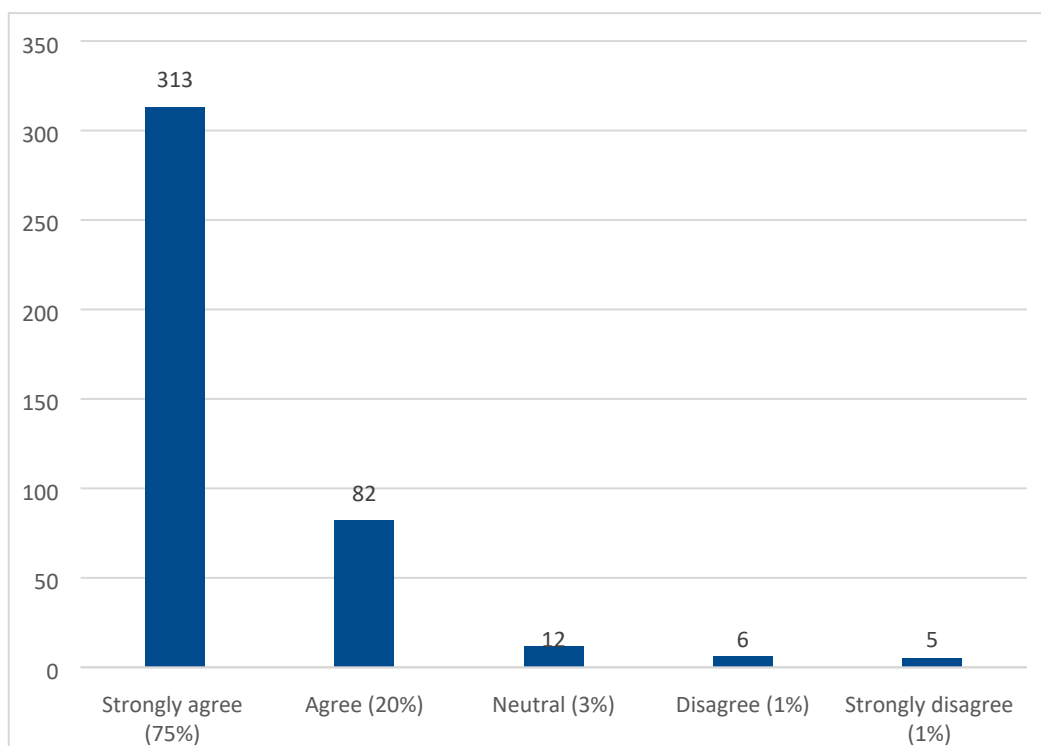
Respondent were given an overview of the draft Equality Objectives for the council based on the following overarching themes:

- Education;
- Work;
- Living Standards;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Safety and respect;
- Participation.

They were asked to tell us if they agreed with the objective and given the opportunity to comment on each objective.

#### 7.2.1 Education

Everyone who accesses education should be free from discrimination, bullying and abuse in educational settings, in order to narrow the attainment gap and reach their full potential.



There were 418 responses to this question.

75% of respondents agreed with this objective and a further 20% agreed with this objective. 3% gave a neutral response and overall 2% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

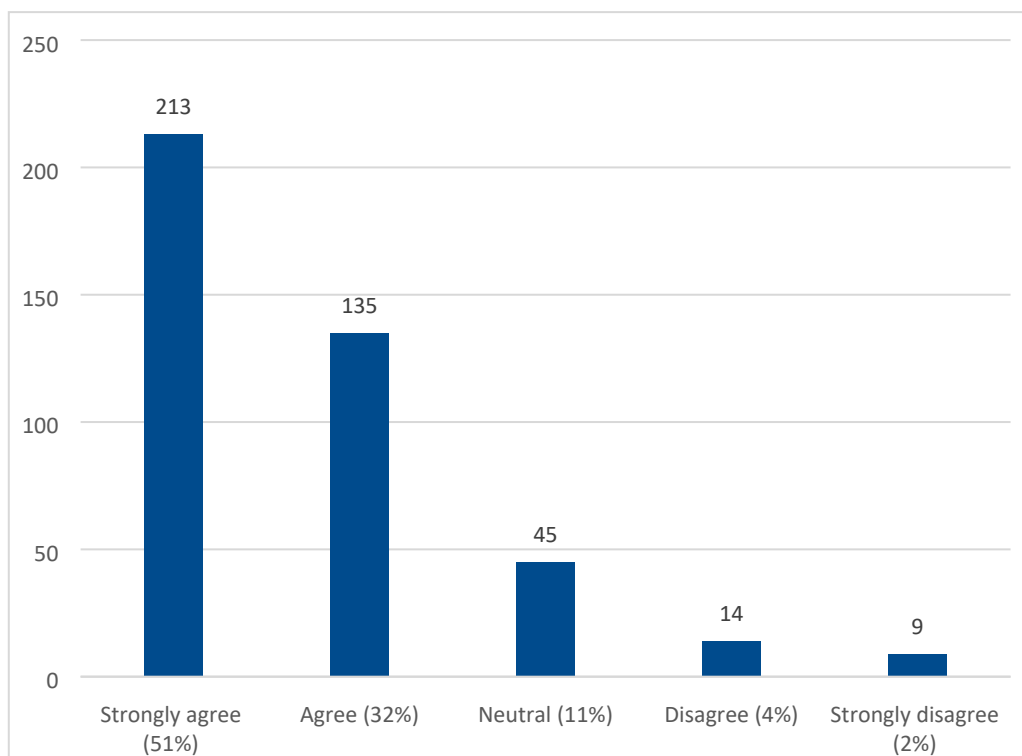
Themed comment:	Number of responses:
Agree with this proposal	16
Need to educate people about and impact of bullying	11
Schools should be held accountable for incidents of bullying	8
Make support available for victims	7
No one should suffer bullying or abuse	7
Not council responsibility	6
Promote what services are available	5
Difficult to achieve	4
Less community learning opportunities in Maesteg	4
Should include staff as well as learners	3
Unaware this was needed	3
Discrimination should be extended to include poverty	2
Should not be linked to attainment	2
Include off-school sites	2
Need to include different forms of bullying	1
Waste of time and effort	1



The most common themes were agree with this proposal, followed by need to educate people about the impact of bullying and then schools should be held accountable for incidents of bullying.

### 7.2.2 Work

Address pay gaps to promote a more inclusive workforce and improve the participation and progression for those with protected characteristics.



There were 416 responses to this question.

51% of respondents strongly agreed with this objective and a further 32% agreed with the objective. 11% gave a neutral response and overall 6% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

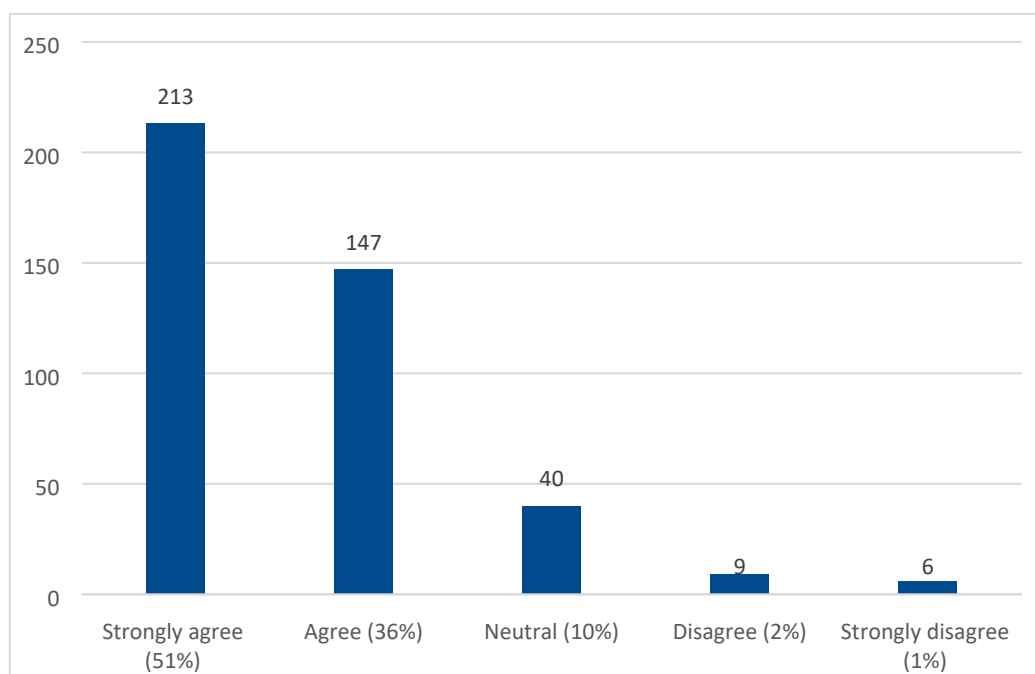
Themed comment:	Number of responses:
There should be equal pay for equal work	28
Employ best person for the job (regardless of protected characteristics)	8
Pay should be based on ability/work	7
Need more information on this to comment	6
Need to work with managers and businesses to understand pay gaps	5
Employers should be responsible for this	3

Agree with proposal	2
Should include more than protected characteristics i.e. those in poverty	2
This is already covered in employment law	1
Does everyone need the same income?	1
Waste of time and effort	1
What about those who are unemployed?	1

The most common themes were there should be equal pay for equal work, followed employ best person for the job regardless of protected characteristics and then pay should be based on ability/work.

### 7.2.3 Living standards

Tackle poverty and support independent living by considering the impact of any policy changes or decisions under the socio economic duty.



There were 415 responses to this question.

51% of respondents strongly agreed with this proposal and a further 36% agreed with the proposal. 10% gave a neutral response and overall 3% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

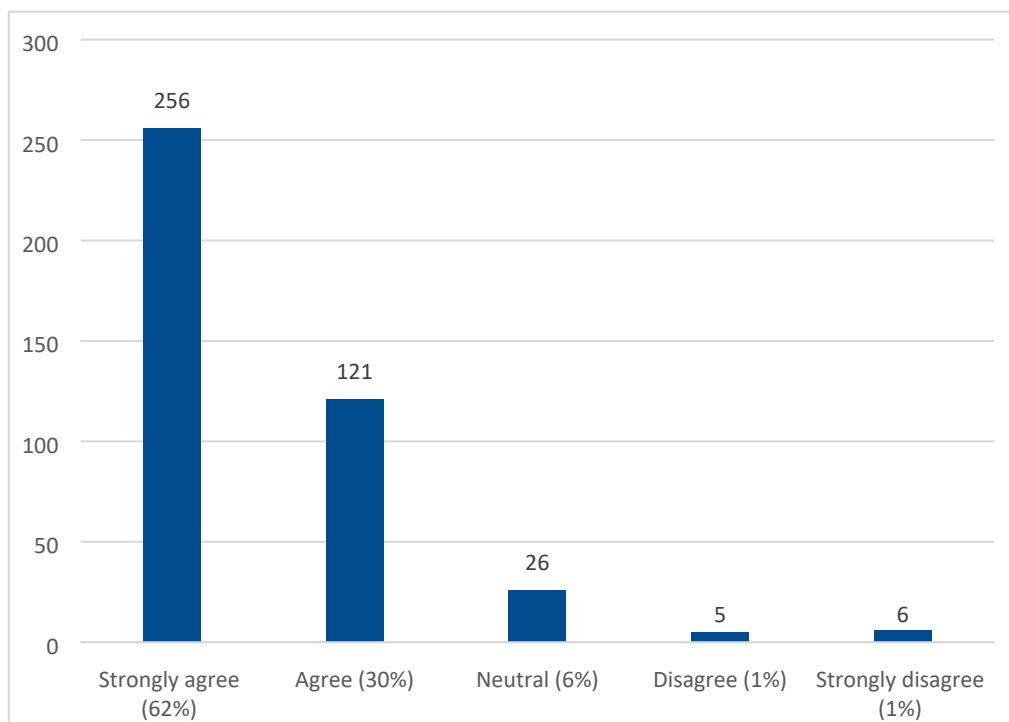
Themed comment:	Number of responses:
This objective could be difficult to achieve	7
People should help themselves	7

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
Agree with this proposal	6
Promote and provide access to services	6
Not enough promotion/resources for independent living	4
Not the responsibility of the council	2
Keep open and maintain public toilets	2
Help those who are homeless	2
Need good transport	2
Need more council housing	1
Need more information	1
Online services are not always accessible	1
Poverty is self-inflicted	1
Why did you close sports pitches	1
Stop wasting council tax payers money/ City Deal2	1
Need to define poverty	1
Need to include other groups	1

The most common themes were this objective could be difficult to achieve and people should help themselves followed by agree with this proposal and promote and provide access to services.

#### 7.2.4 Health and wellbeing

Support and promote good mental and physical health within our communities and our workforce and provide opportunities to participate in leisure and cultural activities.



There were 414 responses to this question.

62% of respondents strongly agreed with this objective and a further 30% agreed with the objective. 6% gave a neutral response and overall 2% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

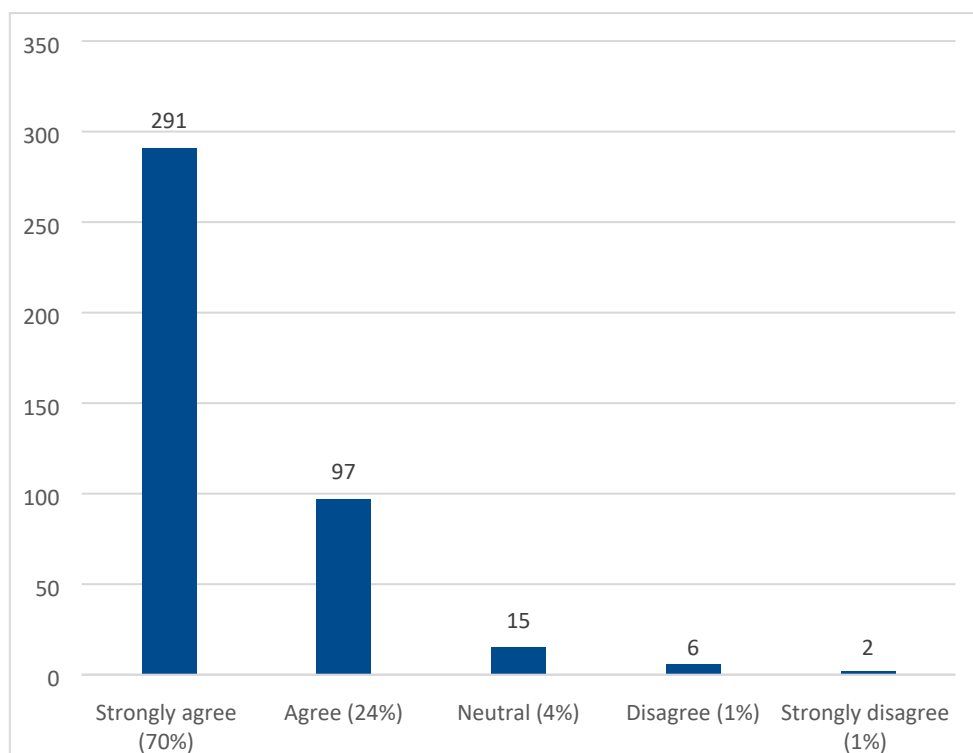
Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
This contradicts the removal of funding for sports pitches	11
Stop cutting these services and put resources into them	11
Improve access to and promote services	11
Support mental health awareness and services	9
agree with proposal	8
Need more facilities for older people (including free swimming sessions)	7
Not responsibility of council	4
This should start at school	4
Porthcawl has no leisure facilities	2
Promote healthy environment (litter picking, less graffiti)	2
I do not see this as a big issue	1
Why get rid of Kenfig nature reserve?	1
need more information	1
This should include those living in poverty	1
Need facilities for younger people	1
Better transport links are needed	1
Reduce gym membership fees	1

The most common themes were this contradicts the removal of funding for sports pitches, stop cutting these services and put resources into them and improve access to and promote service.

### 7.2.5 Safety and respect

Ensure that people within our communities have access to services that support them to live without fear of violence or abuse, and are treated with respect.



There were 411 responses to this question.

70% of respondents strongly agreed with this objective and a further 24% agreed with the objective. 4% gave a neutral response and overall 2% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

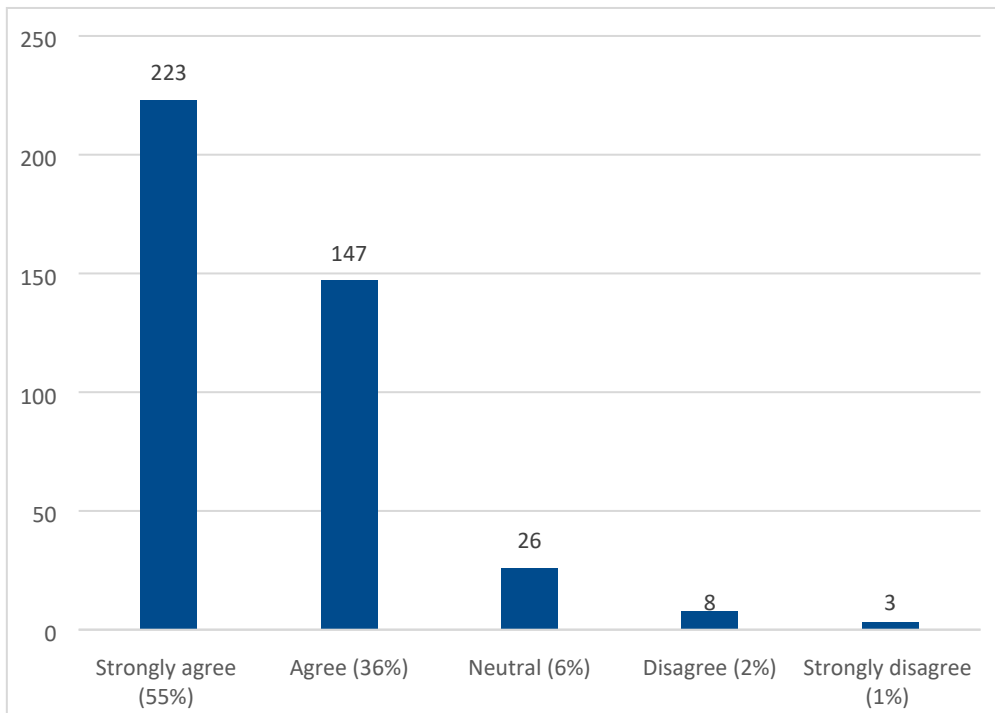
Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
Agree with this proposal	15
Need better/more policing	8
Should work with and promote safety and respect in schools	7
Not council responsibility	5
Promote services available	4
BCBC cutting buses contradicts this	3
Improve CCTV	3
More support for older people	3
Workers should be respected by service users too	2
Pavements and lighting to improve community safety	2
More intergenerational projects	1
More drug improvement projects	1
Fund youth and community projects	1
There should be respect for all	1

The most common themes were agree with this proposal, followed by need better/more policing and then should work with and promote safety and respect within schools.

### 7.2.6 Participation

Encourage people and communities to participate and engage in issues that are important to them, and influence the decisions that we make.



There were 407 responses to this question.

55% of respondents strongly agreed with this objective and a further 36% agreed with the objective. 6% gave a neutral response and overall 3% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this objective.

Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
Provide more opportunities to participate, that is accessible including face-to-face	17
This could be difficult to achieve due to the demographics of the county borough	7
Agree with this proposal	4
People feel excluded from decision making/not being listened to	4
Difficult to encourage participation from individuals/communities	4
Act on opinions not just listen to them.	3
Publish council information and improve public scrutiny i.e. allow questions at council meetings	3
Must be a two-way process	2

Need to provide feedback	2
Only communities know what is important to them	2
Provide up to date and accessible information	3
Build on Citizens' panel	1
Agree with proposal - but people should not be forced	1
Must be cost effective	1
Not council responsibility	1
This should also be a duty of town and community councils	1

The most common themes were provide more opportunities to participate, that is accessible including face-to-face, followed by this could be difficult to achieve due to the demographics of the county borough and then improve access to and promote services, people feel excluded from decision making/not being listened to and difficult to encourage participation from individuals/communities.

### 7.3 Qualitative responses

Finally respondents were asked if they had any other comments about these objectives. Where respondents provided comments on this objective these have been themed and are detailed in the table below:

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
There should be practical implementation of these objectives in communities (toilets, buses, youth services, supported living)	18
These are good objectives	12
Interested in action plan and implementation of this	9
There should be equality for all	7
Objectives could be difficult to achieve	5
How will the costs of this be met?	4
Not council responsibility	3
Objectives could have been 'bigger'	3
This contradicts the removal of buses	2
Do not like positive discrimination	2
Should be able to hold council to account at scrutiny meetings	1
Disabled people are not specifically mentioned	1
Discrimination needs to be broadened to include poverty, not just the protected characteristics	1
Need to educate people about equalities	1
Ensure there is no detrimental environmental impact from any policies.	1
Need to provide more feedback	1

The most common themes were there should be practical implementation of these objectives in communities (toilets, buses, youth services, supported living) followed by these are good objectives and then interested in action plan and implementation of this.

### 7.3.1 Social media comments

Additional responses from social media comments (3) received during the survey's live period were also themed.

Themed comment:	Number of responses:
Query about venues for public engagement sessions	1
Request for face to face engagement rather than online	1
Council should stick to highways and waste issues	1

## 7.4 Communications regarding the consultation

Would you like to be emailed once the consultation report is available?

Yes	174	42%
No	250	58%

42% of respondents told us that they would like to receive information on the consultation once the report is available.

## 8. Conclusion

A sample of 424 survey completions is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of  $\pm 4.752$  at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, to within  $\pm 4.752\%$  of the percentages reported. This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50% was observed, we can be 95% confident that the actual figure lies between 45.248% and 55.752%.

### 8.1 Equality Impact Assessment

The Full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside the SEP action plan which will be made available to Cabinet Equalities Committee in July 2020.

### 8.2 Strategic Equality Plan – action plan

The feedback from this consultation will be used to work with service areas within the council to develop the SEP action plan which will be taken to Cabinet Equalities Committee in July 2020 before publication in August 2020.