

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	12 MARCH 2024
Report Title:	OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER - FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	ZOE EDWARDS - CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EQUALITIES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To inform Cabinet on the outcome of the draft Participation and Engagement Strategy consultation and to seek approval of the Strategy for publication. The consultation was undertaken over a 12-week period: between 30th October 2023 to 22nd January 2024 and received 227 responses.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the draft Participation and Engagement Strategy consultation and approve the Strategy for publication.

2. Background

- 2.1 Public bodies have a duty to engage effectively with their residents. Communication is two-way and it is important that as well as giving out clear information, the public is heard. This Strategy (attached as **Appendix B**) sets out how Bridgend County Borough Council will achieve this.

- 2.2 There is a commitment to engage effectively, and this is underpinned by a range of legislation including the:

1. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
2. Equality Act 2010,
3. Welsh Language Measure 2011
4. Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

- 2.3 Best practice and national standards have been followed, for example the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards and the National Principles for

Public Engagement in Wales. This Strategy sets out our corporate approach to engagement with the people of Bridgend.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 We want to ensure our residents and other key stakeholders are involved in key strategic decisions. The following aims have therefore been developed to ensure we achieve this:

Aim 1:

Bring all the Council's consultation, engagement, and participation activities together into a single, easily accessible online hub, with the long-term objective of developing a portal that joins together all pathways for participation in Bridgend County Borough.

Aim 2:

Ensure effective engagement and participation across Bridgend County Borough.

Aim 3:

Keep up to date with the latest and best methods of engaging with residents of Bridgend County Borough.

- 3.2 The attached consultation report (**Appendix A**) sets out in detail the views expressed by those who participated.
- 3.3 A public survey was available to complete online through a link on the consultation page of the Council's website. Paper copies of the consultation were also available, which could be sent directly to residents upon request. The consultation was sent out to our Citizen Panel, shared with Town and Community Councils and public engagement events were also held throughout the consultation period. Surveys were available in Welsh and English Language; alternative copies were available upon request. The content of the page remains online. Respondents could choose to answer all or some questions. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity.
- 3.4 In total, there were 227 responses to the public consultation, including online completions, paper completions and ideas submitted to our online ideas board.
- 3.5 **Social Media**
The Council currently has 14,766 followers on its English Twitter account and 369 on its Welsh Twitter account; 20,087 followers on its English Facebook page and 262 on the Welsh Facebook page; 3,335 followers on Instagram and 7,298 followers on LinkedIn and 209 subscribers on YouTube. Details of the success of the social media and website campaigns can be found in the full consultation report at **Appendix A**.
- 3.6 **govDelivery**
govDelivery is a digital communications platform that was introduced by the local authority in June 2020 to improve communication. It is currently used to issue Council updates directly to residents' email inboxes in the language of their choice. There are currently 35,158 English language and 280 Welsh language users who have subscribed to receive the Council's weekly update emails.
- 3.7 **Media and publicity**

A press release was issued to coincide with the start of the consultation, to raise awareness and encourage participation. This was released on 17th November 2023 <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/news/consultation-launched-to-shape-council-s-new-engagement-and-participation-strategy/> . A last chance reminder of the Engagement and Participation consultation was included in news round-up on 19 January 2024. The Leader of the Council also shared in his regular update emails to his list of contacts which include local councillors, MP's, MS's.

3.8 Promotional materials Staff Bulletin

Details of the engagement and participation survey were included in our weekly staff bulletin, which included links to the survey and strategy.

3.9 Throughout the consultation period there 7 engagement events, including public drop-in sessions, to encourage residents and members to share their views on the strategy. Details of the event were shared via the Council's social media. Public consultation details:

- ❖ Bridgend Bus Station
- ❖ The Bridge
- ❖ Town and Community Council Forum
- ❖ Corporate overview and scrutiny committee
- ❖ Pyle Life Centre
- ❖ Ogmore Life Centre
- ❖ Garw Valley Life Centre

4. **Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, or socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. **Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. **Climate Change Implications**

6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. **Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. **Financial Implications**

8.1 The costs of carrying out the consultation were met from existing budgets.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the outcome of the consultation and approve the Engagement and Participation Strategy attached as **Appendix B** for publication.

Background documents

None