

Engagement and Participation Strategy

Consultation Report

Date of issue: February 2024

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1. Overview

Bridgend County Borough Council has developed a draft Participation and Engagement Strategy 2023 outlining the steps we will take as a Council to keep people well-informed about our services. To ensure our strategy reflects on our priorities, a public consultation was undertaken over a 12-week period, between 30th October 2023 to 22nd January 2024.

In total, there were **227 responses** to the public consultation, consisting of online completions, paper completions and ideas submitted to our online ideas board.

2. Introduction

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, Youth council 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. An easy-read version of the survey was also available to download from the consultation project page. Respondents could choose to answer all or some questions. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity.

3. Marketing and engagement methods

3.1. Marketing

This section details methods used to raise the profile of the consultation and encourage participation.

3.1.1. Social media

The council runs the following social media accounts: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

The public consultation was posted bilingually to the council's corporate Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn channels throughout the consultation period, to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the strategy.

The council currently has over 20K Facebook followers and 14.7K followers on its English X (Twitter) account, and 369 on its Welsh X (Twitter) account. While content is most likely to be seen by these users, it is also displayed to users who are not connected to the accounts.

The below table shows engagement rates with social media posts promoting the Engagement and Participation Strategy throughout the consultation period.

	Impressions	Comments	Shares	Link clicks
English	18,976	29	19	66
Welsh	106	0	0	0
Total	19082	29	19	66

3.1.2. Engagement HQ

Engagement HQ is a digital engagement platform that was implemented by the local authority in December 2022, to support the council's online consultation and engagement activities. The platform is available in both English and Welsh Language.

The online survey was published using Engagement HQ, with the link available on the consultation page of the council's website.

Visitors Summary

Be involved, Bridgend from 30 Oct'23 to 22 Jan'24



The above image shows an overview of visitors to the Engagement and Participation Strategy project page on Engagement HQ.

The table below shows a highlight of traffic to the Engagement HQ project page for the Engagement and Participation consultation.

Aware visitors	1,000
Informed visitors	454
Engaged visitors	219
Visits referred from social media	143
Visits referred from council's website	59
Visitors from search engine	12
Direct	419

Aware visitors: A visitor that has made at least one single visit to the site or project page, and is therefore 'aware' of the project, but has not clicked anything or participated in the survey.

Informed visitors: An informed visitor has taken the 'next step' from being aware and clicked on something. E.g., viewed key dates, a document. or clicked on the survey (An informed visitor is also always aware)

Engaged visitors: These are visitors that have engaged with the project by submitting a response to the survey. (This means a visitor cannot be engaged without also being informed and aware)

3.1.3. 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.

Cllr Huw David (Leader of Bridgend Council) also shared in his regular update emails to his list of contacts which include local councillors, MP's, MS's.

3.1.4. Gov Delivery

GovDelivery is a digital communications tool that was implemented by the local authority in June 2020, to send messages directly to residents' email inboxes in the language of their choice.

There are currently 35,158 English language subscribers and 280 Welsh language subscribers from Bridgend County Borough to the weekly update emails.

Details of the Engagement and Participation public consultation was included in Gov Delivery bulletins throughout the duration of the live period.

In total 4 bulletins were sent out including the Engagement and Participation consultation, which included links to the strategy and online survey.

The table below shows when details were included in bulletin as well as the number of click through links in both English and Welsh language.

Date	Total English Link Clicks
2 November 2023	33
23 November 2023	16
14 December 2023	11
21 December 2023	19

3.1.5. Staff Bulletin

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

The table below shows when details were included in the staff bulletin, as well as the total number of clicks.

Date	Total English Link Clicks
4 January 2024	738

3.2. Engagement Events

Throughout the consultation period there were 7 engagement events held, 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 Life Centre

As shown below, a promotional poster was created highlighting the aims and ambitions of the Engagement and Participation strategy. This was taken to engagement events to gather views of residents and stakeholders. The poster was created in both English language and Welsh Language and included a QR code which residents could scan to direct them straight to the online survey.

This is also available in Welsh Language

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY CONSULTATION


 Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
 BRIDGEND
 County Borough Council

Bridgend County Borough council has a duty to engage effectively with the people of Bridgend. Communication is two-way and it is important that we listen to and take on ideas from the public as well as giving out clear information.

OUR AIMS & AMBITIONS

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.

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

Ensure effective engagement and participation across Bridgend County Borough.

HAVE YOUR SAY

We'd like to hear your views and observations on our aims and ambitions, you can feedback to us through scanning the QR Code or through the following link:
<https://beinvolvedbridgend.uk.engagementhq.com/engagement-and-participation-strategy-consultation>
 Closing date: 22 January 2024



STRATEGAETH YMGYSYLLTU A CHYFRANOGIAD YMGYNGHORIAD


 Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
 BRIDGEND
 County Borough Council

Mae gan Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr ddyletswydd i ymgysylltu'n effeithiol â phobl Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. Mae cyfathrebu'n broses ddwy ffordd, ac mae'n bwysig ein bod yn gwrrando ar syniadau'r cyhoedd, yn ogystal â chyflwyno gwybodaeth glir

EIN NODAU A'N HUCHELGEISIAU

Dod â holl weithgareddau ymgynghori, ymgysylltu a chyfranogiad y Cyngor at ei gilydd mewn un hwb ar-lein hawdd cael ato, gyda'r amcan hirdymor o ddatblygu porth sy'n uno pob llwybr ar gyfer cyfranogiad ym Mwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr.

Sicrhau ymgysylltiad a chyfranogiad effeithiol ar draws Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr.

Cadw i fyny â'r dulliau diweddaraf a gorau o ymgysylltu â thrigolion Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr.

DWEUD EICH DWEUD

Hoffem glywed eich barn a'ch sylwadau ar ein nodau a'n huchelgeisiau, gallwch roi adborth i ni drwy sganio'r Cod QR neu drwy'r ddolen ganlynol: <https://cymrwch-ranpen-y-bontarogwr.uk.engagementhq.com/arolwg-strategaeth-ymgysylltu-a-chyfranogiad>
 Dyddiad cau: 22 Ionawr 2024



4. Response Rate

In total there were **227** submissions to the public consultation. There were **223** total responses to the survey, **214** responses were submitted through the online survey, and **9** responses were submitted as a paper copies. **4** submissions were made through our online ideas board.

5. How effective was the consultation?

The data collection methods, which include the online survey and a paper survey were developed using plain English to maximise understanding. An easy-read version of the survey was also available to download from the consultation project page. These response methods were designed to give consistency to the survey across multiple platforms.

6. Questions and analysis - consultation Survey

6.1. Language used to complete the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked in which language they would like to complete the survey. Overall, 100% of respondents selected English with 0% selecting Welsh.

Language	#	%
English	223	100%
Welsh	0	0%
Total	223	100.0

7. Survey Questions and Analysis:

This section outlines and analyses all questions asked in the online survey. All questions were optional, so participants could choose to answer all or some questions.

Aims and ambitions.

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.

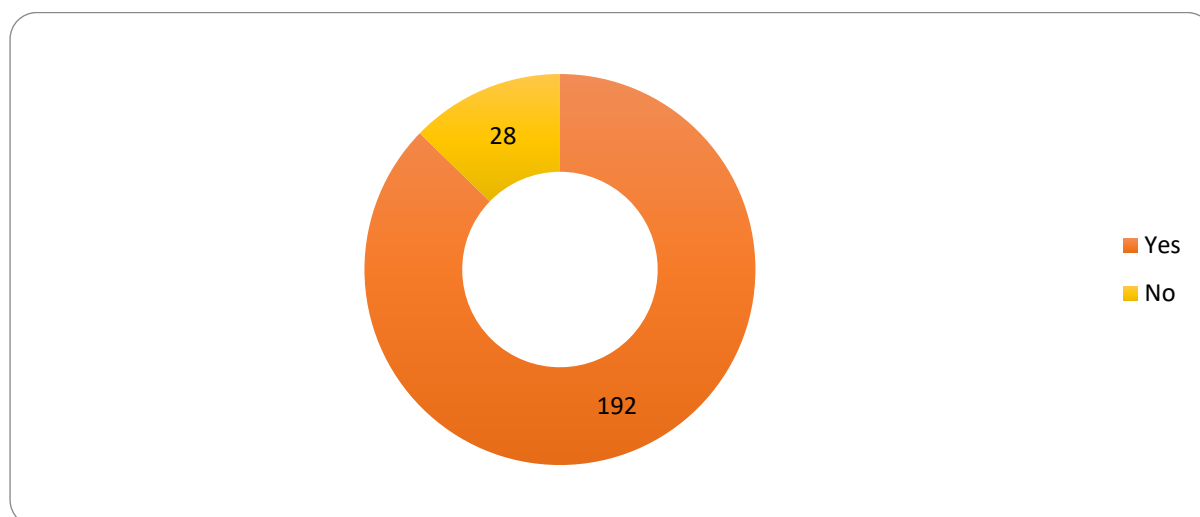
Aim 2:

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.

Are you satisfied with proposed aim 1?



220 respondents submitted a response for this question. 87% of respondents state they agree with aim 1. Whereas 13% of respondents stated they disagree with the aim to 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.

If no, please tell us why:

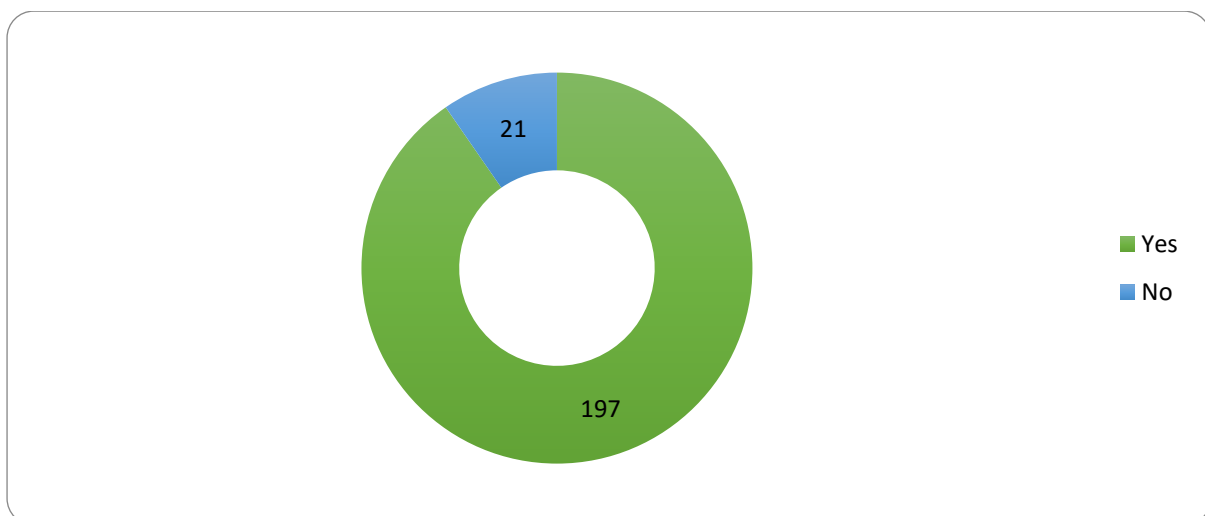
Those respondents that selected they disagree with aim 1 were asked to share further details for their response.

28 respondents provided a further comment. All comments have been themed into the table below.

Theme	Number of respondents
Online only is not accessible to all / Excludes those not online	7
Do not understand aim / further explanation needed	6
Residents' views are not listened to	2
Assuming unsatisfactory completion.	1
No consultation with residents from Porthcawl	1
Prefer to keep opinions private	1
Misunderstanding of aim	1
No engagement with residents of Porthcawl	1
BCBC needs to promote more meaningful and transparent engagement	1
Not an accessible consultation	1
One portal is too hard to navigate / not effective	2
Face to Face consultation is more effective	2
Must be alternatives to the online portal	1
Need measurable timescales	1
Grand Total	28

The top 3 themes identified for this question are as followed; 7 respondents highlighted that an online portal is not accessible to all. 6 respondents do not understand the aim, and further information would be useful. 2 respondents feel that residents views are not listened to.

Are you satisfied with proposed aim 2?



218 respondents submitted a response for this question. 90% of respondents state they agree with aim 2, whereas 10% of respondents disagree with the aim to 'Ensure effective engagement and participation across Bridgend County Borough.

If no, please tell us why:

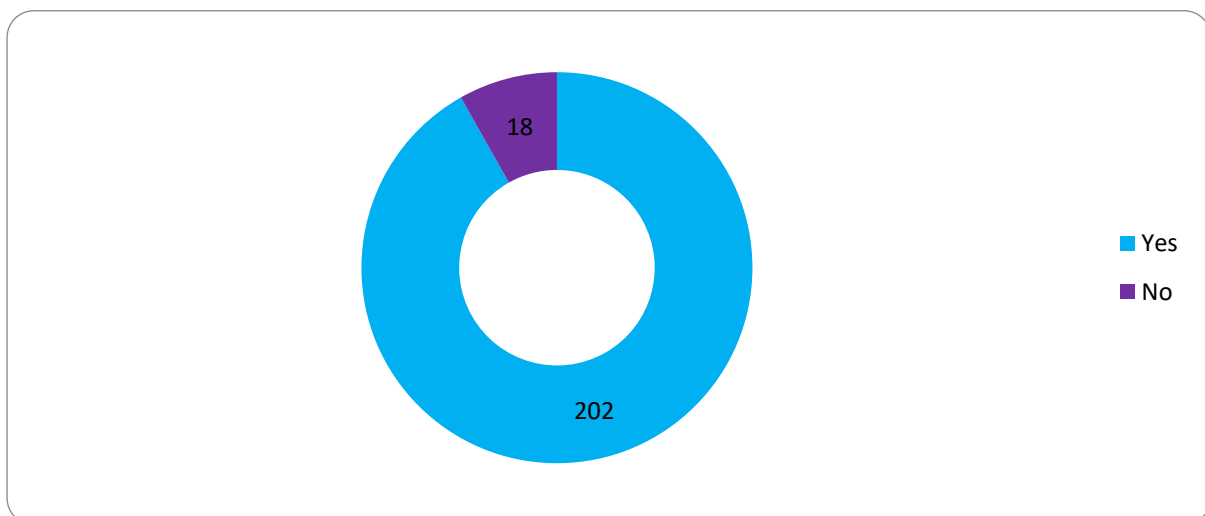
Those respondents that selected they disagree with aim 2 were asked to share further details for their response.

21 respondents provided a further comment. All comments have been themed into the table below.

Theme	Number of respondents
Need more information and measurable aims	8
Aim is too generic, need to be more transparent	2
Negative feedback on the provided service.	1
BCBC doesn't care about the Public	1
Not enough to ensure voices are heard	1
BCBC should have more involvement with the Public	1
Prepaid mail questionnaires should be offered to all households	1
Should be aim number 1	1
Focus on accessibility for all	1
Link with community groups and partners	1
Comments unrelated to consultation	3
Total	21

The top themes identified for this question are as followed; 9 respondents mentioned that more information and measurable aims should be provided. 2 respondents believe that the aim is too generic and further transparency is needed.

Are you satisfied with proposed aim 3?



220 respondents provided a response for this question. 92% of respondents state that they agree with the proposed aim 3. Whereas 8% of respondents disagree with

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

If no, please tell us why:

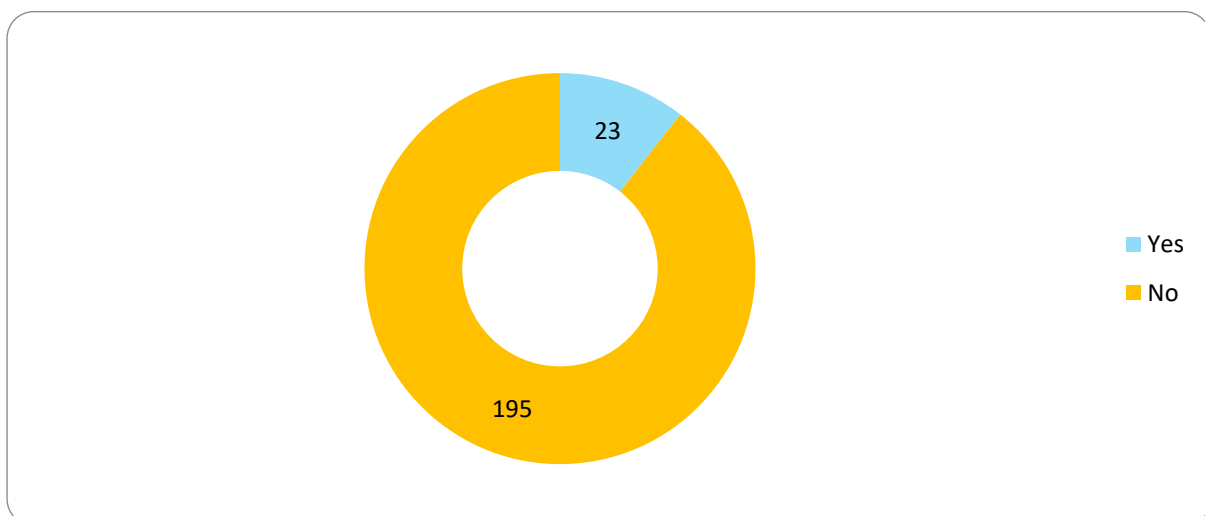
Those respondents that selected they disagree with aim 3 were asked to share further details for their response.

17 respondents provided a further comment. All comments have been themed into the table below.

Theme	Number of respondents
Unambitious aim. BCBC should be doing so already	4
Online will result in being less accessible	3
BCBC should have a more active involvement with residents	2
Further information needs to be provided	3
What expenses are involved	1
Inclusion aim and monitoring engagement would be more effective	1
Stagnant approach - Should focus on implementing latest methods.	1
Comments unrelated to consultation	2
Total	17

The top themes identified for this question are as follows; 4 respondents mentioned that aim 3 is an unambitious aim that BCBC should already be providing. 3 respondents highlighted that focusing on online engagement will result in BCBC becoming less accessible. 2 further respondents feel that BCBC should have a more active involvement with residents.

Are there any aims you think should be removed?



218 responses were provided for this question. 89% of respondents selected no, for any aims to be removed. Whereas 11% of respondents stated there are aims they think should be removed.

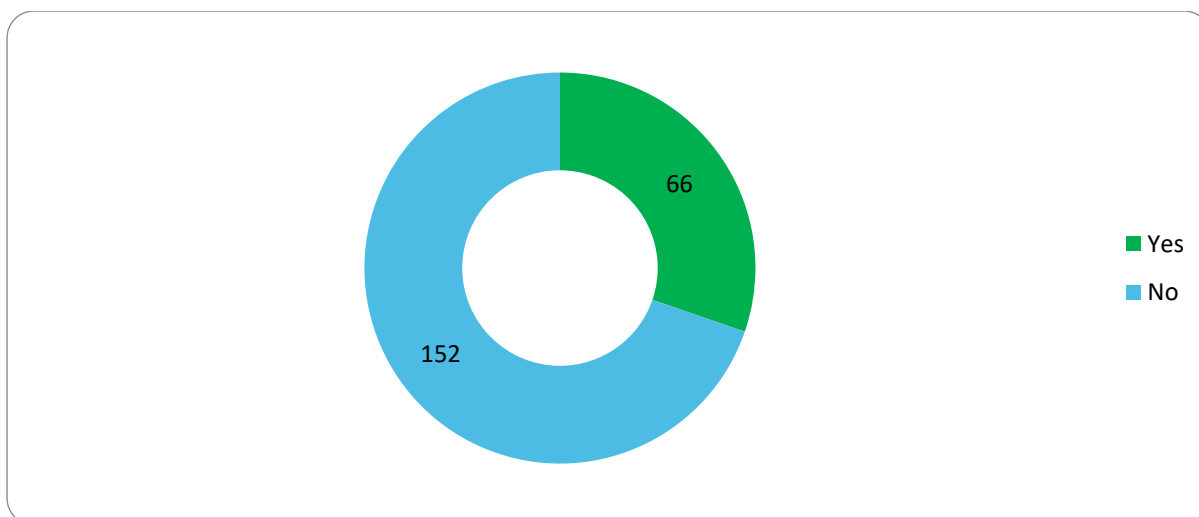
If yes, please state which aim, and why?

Those respondents that selected there are aims they think should be removed, were asked to share further details for their response.

22 respondents provided a further comment. All comments have been themed into the table below.

	Number of responses	Reasons provided for the removal of aim:
Aim 1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not realistic
Aim 2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim is covered in aim 1. • Aim is not helpful
Aim 3	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim is not helpful. • Should be focused on ensuring there are inclusive and preferred methods for Bridgend residents to keep up to date, being inclusive of language, age, and preference. • Should already be in action. • Should be: 'Enable BCBC residents to contribute to proposals so that their voices are heard and reflected in the decision-making processes'
All Aims	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims are not clear and measurable.
Comments unrelated to question	4	
Other comments	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents should be the priority. • Aims are digitalised, are not inclusive to all residents

Are there aims you think should be added?



218 respondents submitted a response for this question. 69% of respondents state there are not any further aims to add. Whereas 31% of respondents think there are other aims that should be added to the strategy.

If yes, please state which aim and why?

Those respondents that selected there are aims they think should added, were asked to share further details for their response.

64 responses were received for this question. All responses are themed into the table below:

Suggested aims unrelated to Engagement and Participation	14
Aim to be more inclusive and engage with all residents	10
Aim focuses on Face-to-Face engagement and communication.	8
Aim to be more inclusive transparent with residents through decision making processes	7
Aim focused on providing timely feedback on results and decisions from consultation and engagement processes	4
Aim to ensure views and needs of residents are considered and listened to in decision making processes	4
Ensure all aims are consulted on with clear explanations and measurable targets	3
Aim to be fair in all decisions making processes across the whole council	1
Aim focused on ensuring there are multiple and accessible methods for residents to feedback on decision making	1
Aims to be actioned	1
Aim focused on involving younger generations in the process	1
Aim 2 - Enable citizens to participate in proposals and decision-making processes by ensuring effective communication, engagement, and participation across Bridgend County Borough	1
Aim to be more understanding and inclusive of Welsh speaking residents	1
Aims considering socio economic disadvantage and other protected characteristics	1

Further information and measures required for aim 2 and 3	1
Engage with local community town councils	1
Accessible public meetings for residents to get involved	1
Aim to provide an inclusive hub, accessible for all residents. Both offline and online.	1
Aim to support community lead engagement and consultations	1
Paper copies should always be available	1
No additional budget should be accounted for, utilise platforms already available.	1
Total	64

The table above shows what aims respondents think should be added to the Engagement and Participation strategy. The top themes for aims are as follows; 10 respondents believe an aim should be added that focuses on being more inclusive and engage with all residents within Bridgend County Borough. 8 respondents mentioned adding an aim that focuses on Face-to-Face engagement and communication, not just an online hub. 7 respondents suggested adding the aim to be more inclusive and transparent with residents throughout decision making processes.

Please leave any further comments regarding our Engagement and Participation strategy below:

75 comments were received for this question. All suggestions have been themed into the table below.

Comment	Number of respondents
To ensure inclusivity, advertise engagement opportunities widely, including offline options for elderly and vulnerable individuals.	11
Comments unrelated to Engagement and Participation strategy	8
Residents need to be listened to and transparency during process is required	8
Communications s be easy to read, avoiding unnecessary information that can make it difficult to understand the main objective.	6
One online portal is limiting, should utilise various tools for all demographics	5
The focus should be on improving people's quality of life, enhancing residents' well-being, and ensuring their safety and happiness.	2
Strategy is vague, needs methodology and timescales	2
Partnership working and lived experience is key to making informed decisions	2
People need to be able to easily access relevant information and services.	2
Strategy is not clear enough or shows how it effects the public	2
Comment on cost of the proposals	2
Happy with the strategy	2

Suggestion to increase character count on surveys	1
Waste of time	1
Decisions are made before the public are listened to	1
Execution is crucial to ensure that aims are both meaningful and effective.	1
Negative feedback regarding Council Tax system	1
Good start	1
Unhappy with the wording of key stakeholders	1
Progress should be monitored throughout implementation	1
Consultations should have a feedback form to evaluate against objectives.	1
Residents input is ignored	1
Suggestion to improve existing functions of BCBC instead of introducing new policy initiatives.	1
Allow face to face engagement	1
The council's objectives are good, but their methods are inadequate. It's important to seek and consider public input to increase the chances of success.	1
BCBC needs customer-focused people to improve its reputation and service levels, as face-to-face customer service is currently lacking.	1
The strategy is satisfactory but should be revised.	1
Town and Community councils should be consulted with	1
Effort and time should be utilised on paid media to increase footfall to BCBC's current platforms.	1
To ensure that all residents' voices are heard, a more comprehensive approach to engagement is necessary.	1
Use more visuals when sharing information like images, videos, graphs, and infographics with captions to ensure accessibility for people using read aloud software.	1
Strategy is poor and needs improvement	1
Strategy needs to be actioned on	1
Too much information for one Hub	1
Documents needs to be fully accessible	1
Suggestion to involve experienced engagement professionals to improve the organization's image and resident's trust.	
Grand Total	75

The top themes identified for this question are as follows; 11 respondents suggested in order to ensure inclusivity, the council should advertise engagement opportunities widely including offline options for elderly and vulnerable individuals. 6 respondents mentioned that its important residents are listened to and transparency during process is required. 6 respondents also stated that communications should be easy to read, avoiding unnecessary information that can make it difficult to understand the main objective.

8. Ideas Board

As part of the consultation process a virtual ideas board was published along side the survey on our Engagement HQ project page. The ideas board was focused on the below question:

In addition to our existing methods to encourage participation, are there any other ways you would prefer to engage and get involved with us?

Suggestions submitted to the virtual ideas board are shown below:

Title	Description
Engagement methods: social media, Seaside news, in person	Better facilities & leisure activities for all generations. We want to keep our town as a seaside tourist resort. Please don't take that away from us.
Social media	More social media content aimed at young people - in an understandable way.
Youth Engagement Sessions	Engaging with young people in Bridgend such as Youth Council etc., schools and youth clubs
Social Media	More relatable social media platforms i.e., TikTok

9. Conclusion

Bridgend County Borough Council has developed a draft Participation and Engagement Strategy 2023 outlining the steps we will take as a Council to keep people well-informed about our services. To ensure our strategy reflects on our priorities, a 12-week public consultation was undertaken focused on the proposed 3 engagement and participation aims:

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.

In total, there were **227 responses** to the public consultation, including online completions, paper completions and ideas submitted to our online ideas board.

The consultation document was available in both Welsh Language and English Language. An easy-read version of the survey was also available to download from the consultation project page. Respondents were able to select online or request paper surveys in all formats.

9.1. Equality Impact Assessment

An initial Equality Impact Screening assessment was completed to identify any negative impacts of the Engagement and Participation strategy and was presented to cabinet alongside the strategy.