

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



Report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd

Date of meeting:	2nd March 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Menna Jones
Contact Officer:	Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Ian Jones (Head of Democracy Services)
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Title of Item:	Participation Strategy - Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Full Council is requested to adopt the Participation Strategy.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Council must encourage local people to participate when it makes decisions and publish a Participation Strategy which notes the ways that local people are encouraged to participate in the Council's decision-making process.

3 INTRODUCTION

It is the Full Council's decision to adopt the Participation Strategy. Before doing so, a consultation is required. A public consultation was held in January 2023, with the results reported to the Cabinet meeting held on 14/02/2023.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 4.1 The Council must prepare a strategy which explains how it will comply with the duty to encourage participation. Therefore, the aim of the public Participation Strategy is to encourage people to participate in the decision-making process and note the arrangements that this Council intends to put in place to embed a culture of partnership with the public.
- 4.2 This is our first Participation Strategy, and the strategy is expected to evolve and improve over time as good practices emerge and as further technological advances are made. See **Appendix A** for a copy of the Participation Strategy.

- What must be included in the Strategy?

4.3 In line with the Act, the elements listed below must be included:

- i. ways of raising awareness amongst local people of the function of the principal council;
- ii. ways of raising awareness amongst local people of how to become a councillor, and what the role of councillor entails;
- iii. ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the council;
- iv. methods of promoting and facilitating processes where local people can submit observations to the principal council, about a decision before, and after, it is made;
- v. arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the Council's duty in section 62 of the Local Government (Wales) Bill 2011 (bringing the public's views to the attention of overview and scrutiny committees);
- vi. ways of raising awareness amongst members of the main council of the advantages of using social media to communicate with local people.

- Establishing a Strategy and Consultation

4.4 It is the Full Council's decision to adopt the Participation Strategy following consultation with the public.

4.5 Prior to the consultation, a draft Strategy was created to try to set out our objectives in terms of participation in accordance with the above requirements in the act. Our intention is to explain how our objectives in terms of participation will make a genuine difference to the way we engage with people in Gwynedd. Within every objective, we have identified clear outcomes and actions.

4.6 A public consultation was held in January 2023 which was an opportunity for individuals to give their views on the content of the draft Strategy. The consultation was published on the Council website and was open for 18 days.

- Assessment of Impact

4.7 Public sector duties. In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including Welsh public sector duties) when making decision, the Council must give due attention to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics.

4.8 The Equality Impact Assessment was prepared as we consulted with the public on the draft Participation Strategy. The Equality Impact Assessment was updated following the consultation and is attached in **Appendix B**. No specific negative impacts have been identified from this work; however we must be careful not to exclude anyone from the arrangements now or in the future due to an over-reliance on technology.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

4.9 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 involves improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals, namely a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language which is globally responsible. The Strategy contributes to fulfilling this duty, specifically coherent communities, by promoting access and contribution to the Council's democratic processes.

- Consultation Results

4.10 89 responses to the consultation were received. The results reported to the Cabinet meeting held on 14/02/2023. The Cabinet were pleased that sufficient response was made following the public consultation, and were happy to recommend the draft Participation Strategy to the Full Council for adoption.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- Public consultation held 06/01/2023 – 23/01/2023
- Submit the results of the consultation and the Draft Strategy to Cabinet – 14/02/2023 for recommendation to the full Council.
- Full Council to adopt the Participation Strategy – 02/03/2023

6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Monitoring Officer:

The legal team and I have contributed to the formulation of the draft strategy. I am satisfied that the necessary process was followed in order to create the recommendation and properly evaluate the relevant considerations. Cabinet has considered these issues and the results of the consultation when coming to its recommendation. I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendation.

Chief Finance Officer:

Nothing to add from a financial proprietary perspective.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Participation Strategy

Appendix B - Equality impact assessment