

Wrexham County Borough Council Involvement Strategy 2018 - 2022

Why are we doing this?

Wrexham Council has made significant progress in improving consultation and engagement with the public in recent years, and have been commended by Wales Audit Office for work in this area. Some improvements and achievements include:

- An online consultation and engagement hub – ‘Your Voice Wrexham’ – shared with Public Service Board partners
- Increased support for, and understanding of consultation across Strategic Leadership and Management team, Executive Board and Scrutiny
- An increase in the number of consultations conducted, and an increase in the number of responses
- Increased interaction with the public through social media and other online platforms

Whilst there has been significant progress in this area, there is a need to broaden the focus from being predominantly on formal consultation, to ‘involvement’. The requirement to consider how we more effectively ‘involve’ citizens and work collaboratively **with** them is highlighted in a number of places. These include:

The Local Government Wales Measure (2011) and other key Welsh Government policies emphasise the importance of placing public engagement at the core of what we do and giving every person the chance to contribute to local decision making.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act – identifies the involvement of people as key to the principles of sustainable development, and essential to future service delivery.

Social Services and Well-being Act – says that Local Authorities must put in place transparent arrangements where people are equal partners in designing and operating services.

Wrexham Public Service Board’s Well-being Plan – says that public sector organisations and communities need to talk and listen to each other in order to improve well-being in Wrexham.

Our Council Plan – says that we will consult and **involve** local people in planning and delivering services. Not only consult with people on how we plan and deliver services, but engage with them to deliver co-produced services or to make it easier for people to help their family, neighbours and themselves.

Our Single Equality Plan – Sets out a commitment to ‘reduce inequalities in representation and voice’.

Along with these over-arching policies, there are a number of related strategies which exist within WCBC. The intention is that these department/service specific strategies should reflect the vision and direction of travel within this corporate involvement strategy, and that these will complement, support and strengthen each other.

What will we do?

The Involvement Strategy will focus on three areas of involvement: Consultation, Engagement and Co-production.

It is important to note that other terminology is used in some areas (particularly in children’s social care and education) where the term commonly used is ‘participation’. This term is used nationally (and internationally) to refer to the involvement of children and young people in decision-making. Therefore, we would consider the terms ‘participation’ and ‘involvement’ to mean the same thing for the purposes of this strategy.

Our Vision ...

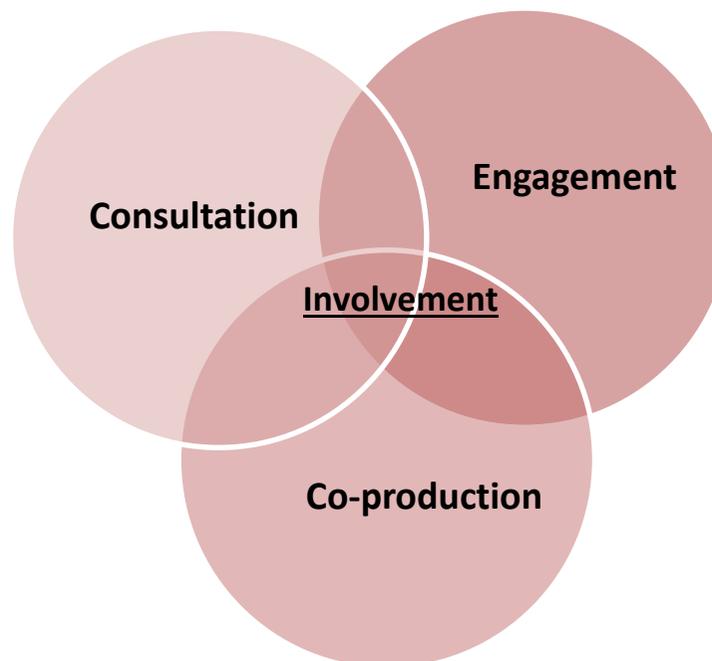
All people have the information they need to influence the planning and delivery of services. They are engaged and consulted with on decisions which affect them, and where possible we work together to design and deliver services.

Consultation is ...

an exercise to gather people's views on specific proposals to help make a decision.

We will ...

1. Ensure that we consult on the right things in the right ways, at the right times, with the right people
2. Ensure that consultations across the organisation are conducted to a consistently high standard
3. Ensure that consultation findings are considered, and used to make informed decisions at all levels
4. Ensure we communicate honestly with people about the outcomes of their involvement in consultations.

**Engagement is ...**

an ongoing conversation where we listen to what people want to tell us, and seek to understand their views on a range of areas, and use them to inform what we do.

We will ...

1. Ensure that there are appropriate and accessible ways for people to engage with us on issues that are important to them
2. Analyse and understand people's views, from a range of sources, and use this information (along with other intelligence) to inform our decisions
3. Develop links and effective relationships with different people and communities across the county borough
4. Recognise and acknowledge the value that engagement has added to our work.

What success will look like?

A reduction in the gap between how important it is to local people that the Council listens to them and how satisfied they are that this is happening, so that we are moving closer to meeting public expectation. (37% in 2016)

We will also measure the gap between how important it is to local people that they are involved in the design and delivery of Council services and how satisfied they are that this is happening (not measured previously).

Co-production is ...

Sharing power with people and communities and working in equal partnership to develop and deliver services that matter together.

We will ...

1. Embed a culture of co-production across the Council, and use this approach wherever it is appropriate
2. Ensure that we work to a consistently high standard across the Council, when co-producing services
3. Develop partnerships with relevant individuals, groups and communities, to share and make use of their knowledge and experience.