



Effective Community Consultation & Engagement

Un Llais Cymru



One Voice Wales

Why This Matters

Community and town councils are at the heart of local life. The more we listen to residents, involve them in decisions, and build lasting relationships, the more trusted, effective, and responsive our councils become.

Good engagement is about more than one off consultations, it's about building ongoing dialogue and helping residents feel connected to the work of their council. This guide offers simple, practical ways to do just that, whatever your size or resources.

Why Consult & Engage?

Consultation is technically any activity that gives local people a voice and an opportunity to influence important decisions. It involves listening to and learning from local people before decisions are made or priorities are set.

What are the benefits?

- Better decisions rooted in community priorities
- New insights, suggestions and ideas
- Greater transparency and trust
- Understanding satisfaction levels with services

Community engagement is a broader and ongoing process of building relationships and encouraging participation.. It fosters collaboration and shared ownership.

What are the benefits?

- Stronger, more resilient communities
- Services better matched to real needs
- Greater civic involvement
- Increased support for council projects and services

Common Challenges

- **Low Awareness and Engagement:** Many residents don't know what councils do or how to engage.
- **Limited Resources:** Small budgets and few staff, making it difficult to run large ongoing engagement activities.
- **Under-represented Groups:** Reaching young people, ethnic minorities, disabled residents, or those digitally excluded takes targeted effort.
- **Lack of Trust:** Negative past experiences can cause reluctance to take part.
- **Diverse and conflicting views:** Balancing competing priorities is not always straightforward.



Watch our
One Voice Wales
'Community
Engagement: Effective
Consultations'
Webinar

Planning your consultation: ✓

- **Define your objectives:**
What do you want to know? What decision needs input?
- **Identify Stakeholders:**
Who should you hear from? Whose voices are missing?
- **Make it inclusive:**
Use plain language and translate materials.
Partner with local trusted groups.
Go where people already are.
- **Act on Feedback:**
Reflect views in decisions. show quick wins, say thank you.
- **Share what you have heard:**
Publish summaries in plain language
Use infographics or short videos
Be transparent about what could and couldn't be changed

Tips For Ongoing Success

- **Start early:** Involve people before decisions are made.
- **Co-produce:** Let residents help shape the consultation itself.
- **Evaluate:** Review what worked and what didn't.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST RESPONSES

- Drop-in sessions, regular community events
- Strong online and offline presence (newsletters, social media, posters).
- Partnerships with local groups, churches, schools
- Citizen panels, youth groups, community led planning.



Engagement Tools & Techniques



Surveys & Questionnaires:

- Online platforms: Survey Monkey, Google & Microsoft Forms
- Paper copies in community centres, libraries and public spaces
- Keep questions short, clear, and focused



Face-to-Face Approaches:

- Community Walkabouts: tour neighbourhoods to talk directly with residents.
- Pop-Up Stalls at markets and local events
- Focus Groups and community forums
- Informal Events: Big Lunches, litter picks, picnics



Digital Engagement:

- Online Surveys & Polls
- Social Media Campaigns



Creative Approaches:

- Art, music & photography projects
- Intergenerational projects
- Theatre or storytelling events

Co-production: Doing Things With, Not For.

Co-production means working in equal partnership with residents to design and deliver services, projects, or solutions. Rather than asking for opinions after decisions are made, co-production brings people in from the start—valuing lived experience alongside professional expertise. Even small councils can co-produce by involving residents in shaping priorities, co-hosting events, or co-designing solutions to local issues.



Participatory Budgeting

[Participatory Budgeting Toolkit](#)

A way to involve residents in deciding how to spend part of the council budget. Good practice includes:

- Public meetings to discuss priorities
- Sharing draft budgets for comment
- Surveys or voting to identify priorities

This builds trust, improves legitimacy, and ensures spending aligns with local needs.



Legislation & Powers

Councils in Wales have the legal authority to consult and engage under:

Local Government Act 1972
Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

These powers support consultation on wellbeing, services, budgets, and precepts.

Powers & justifications can differ, councils should consider their specific circumstances. For advice & guidance, councils may wish to contact their One Voice Wales Development Officer.

admin@onevoicewales.wales

Why Engagement Helps with Funding:

Grant funders look for:

- Evidence of local need
- Community backing
- Well-informed projects with local support

Ongoing engagement strengthens your funding case and shows readiness to deliver impact.

Examples of Good Practice



As part of an initiative to engage a rural community in IT **Rhossili Community Council** completed a community needs analysis. Supported by this information a community hwb project was developed providing digital support.

Blaenavon Town Council Community Events provide an opportunity for facilitated networking between community groups and the Council, with councillors strategically placed to encourage and facilitate dialogue.

Aberporth Community Council used a multi faceted approach in consulting with residents to establish their community priorities and support a 25% uplift in the precept to take on additional services.

In order to understand the problems the community were facing and to target their resources **Criccieth Town Council** embarked upon a community-wide public engagement exercise to develop a 'Place Plan'

Welshpool Town Council set up a market stall offering a 'give and take' scheme for donated allotment produce, using it as an informal and effective way to engage with the community week to week

Llandough Community Council ran a consultation survey to gather the views of older residents on local priorities, service needs, and how best the council could support their wellbeing and inclusion.

Useful Information:



National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales
Practitioners Guide.

Building Community Trust
Shared Learning Resource for Communities

Welsh Government
Democratic Engagement Grant

Want to Find Out More?

For more information on the One Voice Wales Cost-of-Living Crisis project contact the team at:



[One Voice Wales Website](https://onevoicewales.wales)



CoLC@onevoicewales.wales



<https://bit.ly/3KYHftK>