

Why Does it Matter?

Community engagement doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Even the smallest council can start conversations that build trust and give residents a voice.

1

Decide What You Want to Find Out

Before doing anything, ask: what decision or priority needs community input?

Examples:

- setting the precept
- finding community priorities and what residents value most
- understanding what's missing in your community

Top tip: Keep it focused. One clear question gets better responses than ten vague ones

Start here: if you only do one thing



This is the simplest engagement any council can do:

- Print off our 5 suggested survey questions
- Leave paper copies and a sealed return box in 2 or 3 places people already go such as a local shop, GP surgery or community hall
- Put the same 5 questions online with a free Microsoft Form and share the link on your website and social media platforms
- Then count up your answers

This is a complete valid community consultation exercise. Everything else in this guide is optional extras!

2

Choose Your Method

You don't need to do everything. Pick one or two methods that suit your community. Mix digital and in-person for best reach.

Golden rule: Go to where people already are – don't wait for them to come to you!



Digital

Low cost, wide reach

- Online survey using Microsoft forms or Google Forms (both free)
- Post on your Council's Facebook page or community group
- Share a QR code linking to your survey on posters



Print

Reaches those offline

- A simple one page paper survey at the post office, shop or community hall
- Secure return postbox at a local venue
- Include a survey in your council or local newsletter



Face-to-Face

Builds trust, reaches everyone

- Pop-up stall at markets local events or even outside the school gate
- Attend existing groups
- Councillors door knocking on a few key streets
- Host a public drop-in with tea and biscuits

It does not have to be a survey

Some of the best engagement is simply turning up where people already gather and listening. A few minutes at the coffee morning, the lunch club, the chapel, the school gate, the sports club or the local group is often worth more than a formal consultation, and it reaches people who would never fill in a form. You do not need a clipboard or a fixed list of questions. Ask one open thing, such as "what would make life here a bit easier at the moment?", listen, and jot down the themes afterwards. Keep a simple note of where you went and what came up, so it still counts as evidence. For many small councils, this is the most natural and most honest way to find out what residents need.

FROM FEEDBACK TO ACTION

Making Your Engagement Count

The principle: Inform first, ask second.

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Keep Your Survey Short & Simple

Aim for no more than 5 questions.
Use tick boxes and number rankings — open text boxes are often left blank.
Always produce materials in Welsh and English.

5 SUGGESTED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1

How do you feel about how the council communicates with you?

Tick box: Very well / OK / Could be better / Not at all

Q2

Do you feel you get good value from the council?

Yes / No / Not sure

Q3

What are your top 3 priorities for the council?

Ranked list

Q4

Would you like to be more involved in decisions?

Yes / No / Maybe

Q5

Any other comments?

Optional free text

4

Tell People Before You Ask

Residents are more likely to respond if they understand *why* you're asking
Before launching your survey

- put up a simple poster or social media post explaining what you are consulting on and why
- if it's about the precept, explain briefly what the money is spent on
- share a short video from your clerk or a councillor (filmed on a phone is fine!)

5

Analyse and Act

Once responses are in:

- Count up the most common themes and priorities
- Write a short plain summary; one side of A4 is enough.
- Present findings at a council meeting and agree on at least 2–3 actions.

Even if you can't act on everything, showing you've listened builds trust.

How many responses are enough? Do not worry about big numbers. For a small community, 30 to 40 responses is a solid result, and even 15 to 20 gives you a real steer. A response is a response.

Keep it safe: use any personal details people share only for this exercise, and do not keep them longer than you need to.

6

Close the Loop

Tell residents what you heard and what you're doing about it. This is the step most councils miss — and the most important one!



Post a plain-English summary on your website and Facebook page



Update community noticeboards with a brief 'You Said, We Did' notice



Mention outcomes at your next public meeting



Include an update in your newsletter



Say thank you — and show the link between what people said and what you decided

How one council did it - Llandough Community Council

Llandough Community Council wanted to understand what would make their village a better place to grow older. A councillor was appointed as lead and a survey sent to households.

The Survey: Ten straight forward questions asked residents to rate aspects of community life and local services on a scale of 1 to 10 with two open questions inviting comments and asking residents for one thing they would most like to see in Llandough.

The response: 93 completed surveys were returned.

What residents said: Five areas received the lowest satisfaction ratings including access to shops and health related services, lack of community transport and feeling not heard by the council.

What the council did: Survey findings were presented at a community coffee morning and translated into a clear action plan including expanding its community shop, inviting support agencies to community coffee mornings, setting up a community transport scheme and improving communication about council activities.

Case Study: Community Consultation with Aberporth Community Council



Aberporth Community Council carried out a comprehensive consultation to involve residents in shaping the 2025–2026 budget. The aim was to increase transparency around a proposed precept rise and identify community priorities. Using surveys, public meetings, and digital outreach, the Council gathered insights to guide decisions and ensure the budget reflected local needs. The process strengthened trust and encouraged civic participation.

Funding your engagement with your £500 grant

This guide accompanies the One Voice Wales Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme.

Your £500 grant can cover the practical costs of engagement, including:

- printing surveys, posters and a "You Said, We Did" notice
- postage and a lockable return box
- refreshments for a drop-in or pop-up stall
- Welsh and English translation of your materials
- a small incentive, such as a prize draw, to lift responses

If you have not yet applied, see the [scheme guide](#) or contact the team below.

Reaching Everyone

Older people

Paper surveys, warm hubs, door visits

Young people

Social media, school events, youth groups

Digitally Excluded

Printed materials, postbox returns

Welsh speakers

All materials in Welsh and English

Quick-start checklist

- ✓ Decide what you want to find out
- ✓ Choose 1-2 engagement methods
- ✓ Write 5 short simple questions
- ✓ Promote it before you launch
- ✓ Set a clear deadline
- ✓ Summarise what you heard
- ✓ Tell residents what happens next

Using the Evidence

Business Planning

Use survey findings to set priorities demonstrating decisions are rooted in community need

Precept setting

Evidence of what the community wants justifies budgets; show residents their priorities directly shaped spending

Grant applications

Funders ask for proof of local need and community backing; – survey responses are powerful evidence

Want to Find Out More?

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



CoLC@onevoicewales.wales



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



[One Voice Wales Website](#)