

## Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

### Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 2	Anita James	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager	13.3.23

### 1. Details of the initiative

	<b>Title of the Initiative: Draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2028</b>
<b>1a</b>	<b>Service Area:</b> Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement
<b>1b</b>	<b>Directorate:</b> Chief Executive's
<b>1c</b>	<b>Summary of the initiative:</b> The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("the Act") requires councils to encourage local people to participate in their decision making. This includes where councils are making decisions in partnership with another principal council or in conjunction with another individual or body such as a local health board. The Act requires local authorities to publish, consult on, and regularly review a public participation strategy. These strategies are required to set out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I. ways of promoting awareness among local people of the principal council's functions;</li><li>II. ways of promoting awareness among local people of how to become a member of the principal council, and what membership entails;</li></ul>

	<p>III. ways of facilitating access for local people to information about decisions made, or to be made, by the principal council;</p> <p>IV. ways of promoting and facilitating processes by which local people may make representations to the principal council about a decision before, and after, it is made;</p> <p>V. arrangements made, or to be made, for the purpose of the council's duty in section 62 of the 2011 Measure (bringing views of the public to attention of overview and scrutiny committees);</p> <p>VI. ways of promoting awareness among members of the principal council of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people. The draft Public Participation Strategy for 2023-2028 outlines the council's objectives, approach and mechanisms for encouraging and enabling public participation, together with information on how local people can influence decision-making</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot Council's Draft Public Participation Strategy has been developed in line with our wellbeing objectives, as well as the legislation set out in the Act. It supports the priorities in our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 and reflects our values by setting out how we will encourage and enable local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them. It outlines how people can influence the council's decision-making, the mechanisms already in place to encourage and support local people to participate in our decision making and an action plan to build on these.</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council exists to serve and represent the interests of its citizens and communities and is strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in our decision making, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions.</p>
<b>1d</b>	<p><b>Is this a 'strategic decision'?</b> Yes, the draft strategy sets out the Council's approach to public participation</p>
<b>1e</b>	<p><b>Who will be directly affected by this initiative?</b> Everyone who lives, works in and/or visits Neath Port Talbot</p>
<b>1f</b>	<p><b>When and how were people consulted?</b> Following the Statutory Guidance on Public Participation Strategies, made under section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, we involved a number of stakeholders in developing the draft strategy, including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An officer working group – for initial scoping, mapping of existing participation pathways and drafting key information for the strategy</li> <li>• NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) to further develop the baseline, identify what works well, gaps and aspirations for ‘what we could do better’. The NPT CoP also contributed to the overarching objective and approach for the strategy.</li> <li>• The NPT Citizens’ Panel were asked to complete a questionnaire to provide an indication of how much residents currently participate in the council’s decision-making process; which mechanisms for participation they are aware of; the level of interest in participation opportunities; to what extent those who have participated feel their involvement allowed them to have a genuine impact on the decision(s) made; and listen to any suggestions as to what the council could do more to improve public involvement in our decision-making processes. The feedback from this informed the action plan for the strategy</li> <li>• Public consultation - December 2022 to March 2023</li> </ul>
1g	<p><b>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</b></p> <p><b>NPT Citizens’ Panel Questionnaire – Oct/Nov 2022</b></p> <p>The questionnaire received 71 responses. Themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most respondents don’t know that they can get involved in decision making (or that we want them to), not all of those who do know that they can get involved know how to go about doing this</li> <li>• Some feel that council engagement is just box ticking/lip service and we're not really interested in engaging (there is a perception that decisions have already been made)</li> <li>• We don't ‘close the loop’, so for those who have completed surveys/engaged previously they don't see the outcomes of that engagement (there is a mixture with regards to this, some seem to think if we don't do what they want then we haven't listened, maybe because we aren't explaining why we make certain decisions; others seem keen to see survey reports, but don't know where to find them)</li> <li>• There are a number of comments to indicate that respondents don’t feel that our decision making is transparent</li> <li>• Some people don't know who their councillor is, or where to find out – the same goes for council meetings, respondents aren't aware that papers are public and/or that members of the public are able to attend meetings</li> <li>• Most are aware of the website, but there are a few comments that mention we don't do enough for people who are not online.</li> </ul> <p>This feedback, along with information from the NPT CoP and Officer Working Group was used to help develop the overarching objective and the action plan</p>

### **Public consultation**

The questionnaire received 50 responses. Themes included:

- the need for information to be accessible (both in terms of being easy to understand and accessible formats)
- the need to close the loop in terms of letting people know how their feedback has influenced decisions
- the need to make provision for people who are not online
- the need to review the Citizens' Panel and the effectiveness of this
- the need to avoid jargon
- suggestions that the council should consider setting up people's assemblies
- the need to include some face-to-face engagement

## **2. Evidence**

### **What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?**

The draft plan was informed at an early stage by:

- Officer working group - including representation from Legal Services, Corporate Policy, Communications, Democratic Services, Digital Services and Electoral Services.
- NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (NPT CoP) - the NPT CoP was established in 2019 and membership has grown to 60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work. The purpose of the CoP is to provide a vehicle for members to work more smartly and in a more collaborative way to ensure that everyone in our communities can have the opportunity to have their say on the decisions that affect them. It is intended to provide a professional and respectful forum for members to share experiences and knowledge on involvement and engagement issues in a spirit of mutual learning and peer support.
- NPT Citizens' Panel - launched in January 2020, the panel is made up of more than 500 residents from across the county borough and actively involves them in decision making at a very early stage, so they help shape proposals before these go out to wider public consultation.

Public consultation was undertaken from December 2022 – March 2023. The draft strategy was amended in light of the consultation feedback.

## **3. Equalities**

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age			+/-	<p>The questionnaire used during the public consultation specifically asked respondents to indicate whether they felt the Draft Public Participation Strategy would have an impact on them and/or their family because of any of the 9 protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Of those that responded, the numbers indicated that the proposals would have an impact were as follows (although very few gave reasons for their responses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age – 24% (9). One respondent said that they are not on any social media sites and have very limited digital knowledge / experience.</li> <li>• Disability – 17% (6).</li> <li>• Race – 9% (3).</li> <li>• Sex – 6% (2). There were reasons given for the responses relating to sex</li> <li>• Sexual orientation – 9% (9).</li> <li>• Religion or belief – 11% (4). One respondent expressed the need to maintain their Christian belief whilst respecting other religions</li> </ul>
Disability			+/-	
Gender reassignment			+/-	
Marriage & civil partnership			+/-	
Pregnancy and maternity			+/-	
Race			+/-	
Religion or belief			+/-	
Sex			+/-	
Sexual orientation			+/-	

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on people who share a protected characteristic. These include:

- Ensuring the Council's forward plan supports public engagement by being accessible, timely and user friendly
- Promote Welsh Government's Guidance / materials for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales. Explore Web-based platforms.

- Elections and Education Directorate to explore other potential avenues through school forums / youth councils / career fairs.
- Continue to engage with schools (subject to pandemic), including links with school councils and youth councils
- Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them
- Liaise with Group Leaders to suggest they appoint Diversity Champions for each political group
- Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office. The survey feedback will help to deliver a positive and diverse environment for future Members to undertake their roles
- Explore feasibility of workshops in schools on this to raise aspirations and educate on the role of elected members
- Explore feasibility of 'Member for a day' experience (like work experience) and/or some case studies on the role of elected members and what the impact they can have – perhaps linked to Local Democracy Week
- Review and further develop the Neath Port Talbot Citizens' Panel, and in conjunction with the relevant stakeholder groups, identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate
- A Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement Strategy is being developed. The strategy will provide a clear framework for participation with children and young people and will include an engagement model
- Ensure that information is accessible to all – e.g. friendly tone, easy read etc.
- Develop a better understanding of the demographics of residents who regularly provide feedback, so that any gaps in representation can be identified
- Continue to develop more meaningful and innovative forms of engagement to allow residents to participate and be involved in co-production
- Ensure information on the council website is accessible

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	+			Through the development of the draft Public Participation Strategy we are aiming to embed a consistent approach to participation, involvement and engagement, we will follow the principles of:

To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	+			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility – we will adapt what we do for different audiences, ensuring that our activities are made available in the formats and language(s) that people need. In addition, we will make the most of the opportunities that digital technology presents to enable our communities to participate in decision making, but equally, we are aware that digital technology is not available to or the preference of everyone and we will make provision for this.</li> <li>• Inclusivity and Non-discrimination - We will be sensitive to the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 - age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.</li> <li>• Empowerment – we will endeavour to make sure our communities can be part of our decision making process, enable them to influence meaningful change, and demonstrate back to them that their voices have been heard</li> </ul> <p>This approach will help to work to reduce inequalities across a range of different groups, not just in relation to protected characteristics.</p>
To foster good relations between different groups	+			

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

**4. Socio Economic Duty**

What is the impact	Why will it have this impact?
Positive	The aim of the plan is to have a positive effect by encouraging and enabling local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them.

	One of the 3 key principles for how we will approach participation, involvement and engagement is accessibility – we will adapt what we do for different audiences, ensuring that our activities are made available in the formats and language(s) that people need. In addition, we will make the most of the opportunities that digital technology presents to enable our communities to participate in decision making, but equally, we are aware that digital technology is not available to or the preference of everyone and we will make provision for this.
Negative	The cost of travel in order to participate in council meetings may disadvantage some residents, likewise online meetings and other online mechanisms may disadvantage digitally excluded residents
Neutral	

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on Socio Economic Duty. These include:

- Meet with stakeholders face to face within their own communities and groups so we can better get to know them and the issues that matter to them (this will also make provision for those who are not online)
- Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders
- Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election
- Support the Welsh Government’s and IRPW’s commitment to explore Resettlement grants or ‘parachute payments’ payments for Members who lose their seats at election
- Reviewing meeting times to have more flexibility to suit the committee Members

**5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty**



	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	+			Robust, consistent and effective public participation will help the council to understand our local communities and identify issues relating to Community Cohesion, Social Exclusion and Poverty. It will be vital in helping to inform and shape strategies, plans and activities to address these.
Social Exclusion	+			
Poverty	+			

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

## 6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language	+			During the consultation the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what effect they think the Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on people's opportunities to use the Welsh Language. Of those that responded to this question, 51% (19) thought they would have no effect, 19% (7) thought they would have a positive effect, no respondents thought they would have a negative effect and 30% (11) didn't know.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	+			During the consultation the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate what effect they think the Draft Public Participation Strategy will have on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language. Of those that responded to

				<p>this question, 51% (19) thought they would have no effect, 14% (5) thought they would have a positive effect, 3% (1) thought they would have a negative effect and 32% (12) didn't know.</p>
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**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

The Strategy has been developed in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote opportunities for participation in the Welsh language and that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in our participation activities and mechanisms.

The action plan in the strategy includes a number of actions which will contribute towards improving positive or mitigating negative impacts on the Welsh language. These include:

**7. Biodiversity**

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

<b>Biodiversity Duty</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>Why will it have this impact?</b>
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	+			<p>The Public Participation Strategy will support the decision-making process by ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach to participation, involvement and engagement. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach, we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard, leading to more robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders – including decisions that have an impact on biodiversity and/or promoting the resilience of ecosystems</p>
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	+			

**What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?**

**8. Well-being of Future Generations**

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. <b>Long term</b> – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	The Public Participation Strategy will be reviewed and subject to formal consultation by the council following local government ordinary elections – the next due to take place in 2027.
ii. <b>Prevention</b> – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	<p>The Public Participation Strategy will support the decision-making process by ensuring a corporate and coordinated approach to participation, involvement and engagement. By working towards shared objectives and embedding a consistent approach, we aim to ensure our public participation activities are of a consistently high standard and involve as many local people as possible.</p> <p>Greater public participation can help prevent problems occurring or getting worse by building trust and leading to more robust decisions that have considered the needs and interests of stakeholders.</p>

<p>iii. <b>Collaboration</b> – working with other services internal or external</p>	<p>The Council will be unable to implement the Public Participation Strategy without collaboration. The NPT Community of Practice on Involvement and Engagement (60+ council officers and representatives from partner organisations who regularly engage with specific stakeholder groups as part of their work) has played a key role in shaping the draft strategy and will be key in its roll out.</p> <p>The Council is also statutory partner of a number of multi-agency partnerships locally, regionally and across Wales including: the Public Services Board, Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, Regional Partnership Board and West Glamorgan Safeguarding Board and these are key stakeholder groups for public participation.</p>
<p>iv. <b>Involvement</b> – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p>The strategy aims to encourage local people to participate in the making of decisions by the Council and sets out how we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote awareness of the Council’s functions and how to become a Member of the authority;</li> <li>• Facilitate access to information about decisions made, or to be made by the Council;</li> <li>• Promote and facilitate processes by which local people may make representations to the Council about a decision before, and after, it is made;</li> <li>• Set out the arrangements for bringing views of the public to the attention of scrutiny committees; and</li> <li>• Promote awareness among Members of the benefits of using social media to communicate with local people.</li> </ul>
<p>v. <b>Integration</b> – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	
<p><b>Council’s draft well-being objectives</b></p>	<p>This Public Participation Strategy reflects the values in our Corporate Plan 2022-2027 by setting out how we will encourage and enable local people and communities in Neath Port Talbot to be actively involved in decisions that affect them, including decisions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Communities are thriving and sustainable</li> <li>• Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations</li> <li>• Local people are skilled and access high quality, green jobs</li> </ul>

<b>Other public bodies objectives</b>	
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### 9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

Progress against the Strategy will be reported through our Annual Self-Assessment Report

This strategy will be reviewed and subject to formal consultation by the council following local government ordinary elections, however this document is a living document and will be reviewed by council officers on a regular basis to establish how the council can further enhance its participation programme.

### 10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Equalities</b>	The IIA will be revisited in light of responses to the consultation in March 2023, conclusions to the assessment will be reached and included in the next version of the IIA.
<b>Socio Economic Disadvantage</b>	
<b>Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty</b>	
<b>Welsh</b>	

<b>Biodiversity</b>	
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	

### Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative


### 11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
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Ongoing work with the NPT CoP and their stakeholder groups to identify appropriate arrangements to enable members of stakeholder groups with protected characteristics to participate.	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager and the NPT CoP	Ongoing	The NPT Citizens' Panel membership will be representative of the profile of residents in the county borough in terms of protected characteristics.
Monitor equalities and diversity data concerning residents who have provided feedback	NPT CoP and complaints officers	Ongoing	

## 12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
<b>Completed by</b>	Anita James	Corporate Policy, Performance and Engagement Manager		13.3.23
<b>Signed off by</b>	Sheenagh Rees	Head of People & OD		19 <sup>th</sup> April 2023