

**COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG**  
**RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION**

**Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision** ✓

**PWNC | SUBJECT: Developing a Draft Involvement Strategy - Public Consultation**

**DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:**

This report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication as described below:

**To seek authority to undertake a public consultation on the Council's Draft Involvement Strategy**

**PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:**

**AGREED**

- i. To undertake a wide ranging consultation on the draft Involvement Strategy.
- ii. To utilise the feedback from the Consultation to help inform the final version of the strategy



**Llofnod y Prif Swyddog**  
 Chief Officer Signature

Christian Hanagan

**Enw (priflythrennau)**  
 Name (Print Name)

17.05.24

**Dyddiad**  
 Date

**Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.**

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

**YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION**

*M. Webber.*

\_\_\_\_ 17.05.24 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET**  
CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

**DYDDIAD | DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL**  
CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DYDDIAD | DATE**

**RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.**

**A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:**

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YDY | YES x      NAC YDY | NO ✓

**Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:**

***Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:***

*If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:*

.....  
(Llywydd | *Presiding Member*)      .....  
(*Dyddiad | Date*)

**DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.**

**NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.**

**DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES**

**CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION**

**Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:-** \_\_\_\_21.05.24\_\_\_\_

**DYDDIAD | DATE**

**GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

**Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.**

**Note:** This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be**

\_\_\_\_28.05.24\_\_\_\_  
**DYDDIAD / DATE**

**WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION : ✓**



**Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:**

Cyfadrann   Directorate:	Chief Executive
Enw'r Person Cyswllt   Contact Name:	Chris Davies
Swydd   Designation:	Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### KEY DELEGATED DECISION

#### REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION.

MAY 2024

#### DEVELOPING A DRAFT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPUTY LEADER, CLLR WEBBER.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek authority to undertake a public consultation to support the development of the Council's Draft Involvement Strategy.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- 2.1 To agree to undertake a wide ranging consultation to inform a future Involvement Strategy.
- 2.2 To utilise the feedback from the Consultation to help inform the strategy.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council has a good track record of engaging with residents from all backgrounds in many different ways., but we also know that there is always room to do better and this draft Strategy provides a framework for all Council services to follow and improve their engagement.
- 3.2 This Strategy will seek to provide overarching guidance to Council services on how to involve stakeholders in decision making and ensure that the voices of people and communities are heard. There are a number of links and documents throughout the Framework that provide the more detailed guidance and advice needed to meet the draft vision:

***A Rhondda Cynon Taf where everyone in the community is able to have their say in the planning and delivery of Council services. Where people know how to have their say, have a range of ways to have their say and know that their views are considered when decisions are being made.***

## 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This strategy will seek to build upon our [Involvement Framework 2020](#). The framework was overtaken by the events of the pandemic, where we moved to a “digital by default” approach for a time, supported by telephone and postal options.
- 4.2 With residents adapting to online approaches and the range of methods available we will continue to make use of them, whilst ensuring that we continue to engage with the 9% of the population that are digitally excluded. We have always provided a range of face to face opportunities for residents, and this will continue.
- 4.3 This strategy will reflect the new requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to produce a [Public Participation Strategy](#), to encourage people to participate in Local Government and have a greater involvement in the democratic process.
- 4.4 In addition, the new Involvement strategy is timely, as the Council has just adopted a number of new overarching strategies that work alongside. Firstly, the Council’s [Corporate Plan](#) for 2024-2030 has been developed and commits to putting residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful involvement and engagement. Secondly, the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 commits to listening and seeking to understand the experiences of all.

## 5. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The consultation on the draft Strategy will be hosted on our engagement platform [Let's Talk RCTCBC](#), which will utilise a number of tools, including the poll, ideas and survey functions. The site will include a range of relevant information.
- 5.2 The consultation will focus on the Vision and Objectives of the draft Strategy;

***‘A Rhondda Cynon Taf where everyone in the community is able to have their say in the planning and delivery of Council services. Where people know how to have their say, have a range of ways to have their say and know that their views are considered when decisions are being made.’***

### Objectives

- 1 - Strengthen and develop clear opportunities for residents to have their say and have an influence on decisions made by the Council.**
- 2 - Make it easy for everyone to take part.**
- 3 - Encourage a wide range of people and groups to get involved.**

**4 - Working together - Coordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation to avoid duplication**

**5 - Feeding back**

**6 - Provide staff with the skills they need**

**7 - Evaluate and improve**

- 5.3 The consultation will take place over the Summer, between June and September, with a number of face to face engagement opportunities proposed, where consultation officers will visit areas across RCT and arrange engagement events to talk to and reach as many people as possible to discuss the vision and objectives.
- 5.4 Involvement packs will be produced to help aid discussions at organised meetings, existing groups / networks / forums and allow lead organisers and consultation contacts to help engage with a range of groups. Existing groups include but are not limited to the Disability Forum, Youth Forum, Neighbourhood Networks, Minority groups, LGBT+, OPAG, 50+ Forum and Third Sector.
- 5.5 A plain English summary of the Draft Strategy will be produced to be easily accessible to people wishing to take part in the consultation, and paper hard copies of the survey will be printed upon request.
- 5.6 The Council's Communications Team will promote this consultation through social media and the Council's website. Information on upcoming events will also be promoted on the Let's Talk page.
- 5.6 Elected Members will be provided with the opportunity to engage and inform a draft strategy, during the consultation through workshop style settings. Other key stakeholders including MS's/ MP's, Town & Community Councils, Neighbouring authorities, other public bodies, our Citizens' Panel and businesses will be encouraged to participate.
- 5.7 Through assistance of Officers within the Youth Engagement and Participation service, we will engage with young people. This approach will include focus groups being undertaken at a selection of secondary schools.
- 5.8 Discussions will be held with relevant officers to ensure that the appropriate links are made with other strategic policies, such as the Corporate Plan, Equalities plan, Youth Services, Digital / Customer Care and Welsh language.
- 5.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will support the development of the strategy, including pre-scrutiny of the final strategy prior to consideration by the Council's Cabinet.



## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS including socio economic duty**

6.1 The draft strategy aims to link in with the recently adopted Strategic Equality Plan which commits to listening and seeking to understand the experiences of all. Objective 3 – Encourage a wide range of people and groups to get involved, outlines the following;

- Monitor the diversity of our engagement, to make sure that we are hearing the voices of people with different protected characteristics, including underrepresented people.
- Ensure that those who are digitally excluded have opportunities to have their say. Include digital engagement alongside in person engagement.
- Consider any distinct experiences and situations. (E.g. physical and attitudinal barriers that disabled people may face.).
- For those with particular needs provide specific approaches and opportunities to get involved in engagement, e.g., children and young people. Link to Youth Engagement Partnership Strategy.

## **7. WELSH LANGUAGE**

7.1 All of our engagement activity is bilingual and we have a list of Welsh language organisations that we engage with.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 A formal Consultation will be undertaken on the draft strategy as outlined above. This will inform the development of a final Strategy.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1 All costs associated with the consultation will be contained within existing budgets.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 Although no direct legal requirement to provide an Involvement Strategy, there are a number of relevant standards and principles that inform our approach across the Council, these include;

- Participation Cymru's National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales
- Children and Young People's National Participation Standards (2016); and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – says that Local Authorities must put in place transparent arrangements where people are equal partners in designing and operating services.
- The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) – places a duty on councils to promote and encourage participation in council decision-making. It does this by

placing requirements on all principal councils to prepare and publish a public participation strategy.

- [The Equalities Act \(2010\) and The Public Sector Equality Duty](#):
- [Welsh Language Standards](#) in particular standards 44, 91, 92 and 93
- [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) asks public bodies to work better with people, communities and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle, i.e. the process of improving the social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of residents.

## **11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

11.1 The draft strategy aims to link in with the recently adopted Corporate Plan which commits to putting residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful involvement and engagement.

11.2 [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) asks public bodies to work better with people, communities and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle, i.e. the process of improving the social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of residents. One of the Sustainable Development Principles is “Involvement of those with an interest in our plans and seek their views”. By implementing this Strategy, we will help services to embed ‘Involvement’ into their plans and arrangements and so enable to the Council to meet its requirements under the Act.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 The Council's Draft Involvement Strategy will provide a framework for services to better engage with residents, communities and stakeholders, so that more people can get involved in the decisions that affect them and their communities.

12.2 The final Strategy will be informed by wide-ranging engagement with residents and community groups and will be amended to reflect the views and ideas provided.

Dewch i  
siarad RhCT  
Let's talk  
RCT



# LET'S TALK YOUR VIEWS

Involvement  
Strategy

2024



## Introduction

The Council has a good track record of engaging with residents from all backgrounds in many different ways and we take account of what they tell us in our planning and changing of services. We also know that there is always room to do better.

We will continue to look at how we engage with residents, communities and stakeholders and see where we can improve, so that more people can get involved in the decisions that affect them and their communities.

This Involvement Strategy will provide a framework for Council services to follow to meet our vision of;

**A Rhondda Cynon Taf where everyone in the community is able to have their say in the planning and delivery of Council services. Where people know how to have their say, have a range of ways to have their say and know that their views are considered when decisions are being made.**

The Strategy provides some overarching guidance to Council services on how to involve stakeholders in decision making and ensure that the voices of people and communities are heard. There are a number of links and documents throughout the Framework that provide the more detailed guidance and advice needed to meet our Vision.

## Background

The 2024 strategy builds on our [Involvement Framework 2020](#). The framework was overtaken by the events of the pandemic, where we moved to a “digital by default” approach for a time, supported by telephone and postal options.

With residents adapting to online approaches and the range of methods available we will continue to make use of them, whilst ensuring that we continue to engage with the 9% of the population that are digitally excluded. We have always provided a range of face to face opportunities for residents, and this will continue.

This strategy has also been updated to provide a link to the new requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to produce a [Public Participation Strategy](#), to encourage people to participate in Local Government and have a greater involvement in the democratic process.

In addition, the new Involvement strategy is timely, as the Council has just adopted a number of new overarching strategies that work alongside. Firstly, the Council's [Corporate Plan](#) for 2024-2030 has been developed and commits to putting residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful involvement and engagement. Secondly, the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 commits to listening and seeking to understand the experiences of all.

## What we will do – Our Vision for better Involvement

Our approach is based around the following key vision and 7 objectives, which link closely with the [National principles for public engagement in Wales](#).

Note: The National Principles provide set of guidelines to organisations within the public and voluntary sectors in Wales. Organisations who follow these principles will ensure that people and communities can engage with decisions that affect them.

### Vision

**A Rhondda Cynon Taf where everyone in the community is able to have their say in the planning and delivery of Council services. Where people know how to have their say, have a range of ways to have their say and know that their views are considered when decisions are being made.**

### Our Involvement Objectives:

#### **1. Strengthen and develop clear opportunities for residents to have their say and have an influence on decisions made by the Council.**

- Involve people at the earliest opportunity, identifying the people who may be affected by the issue or proposed change, and / or who have an interest in taking part.
- Clearly communicate the purpose of our engagement (why should people give up their time and how they and their communities could benefit) and the process (what can people expect from it, how and when).
- Use the most suitable method(s) for those involved.
- Consider the importance of current and future generations in our engagement activity, using suitable methods.

#### **2. Make it easy for everyone to take part.**

- Provide jargon free, plain English and Welsh language information, provided to everyone in a way that's easy to understand.
- Provide enough time, space and resources for meaningful involvement.
- Talk to people in their communities.
- Provide more opportunities and a variety of accessible formats.

### **3. Encourage a wide range of people and groups to get involved.**

- Monitor the diversity of our engagement, to make sure that we are hearing the voices of people with different protected characteristics, including underrepresented people.
- Ensure that those who are digitally excluded have opportunities to have their say. Include digital engagement alongside in person engagement.
- Consider any distinct experiences and situations. (E.g. physical and attitudinal barriers that disabled people may face.)
- For those with particular needs provide specific approaches and opportunities to get involved in engagement, e.g., children and young people. Link to Youth Engagement Partnership Strategy.

### **4. Working together - Coordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation to avoid duplication.**

- Work across services to maximise the opportunities for involvement and make best use of resources.
- Use existing groups and stakeholders.
- Work with other organisations to reduce duplication and create an engagement process which is more effective and produces less consultation fatigue.

### **5. Feeding back.**

- Let people know the impact of their contribution.
- Timely feedback about the decisions or actions taken as a result, using methods and forms of feedback that take account of participants' preferences, even when not every contribution has been acted on.
- Provide updates on our website and Council reports and in different ways so that it meets the needs of different audiences.

### **6. Provide staff with the skills they need.**

- Invest in training for involvement and engagement skills to ensure effective involvement.
- Provide staff with the right resources and time for engagement to be effective.



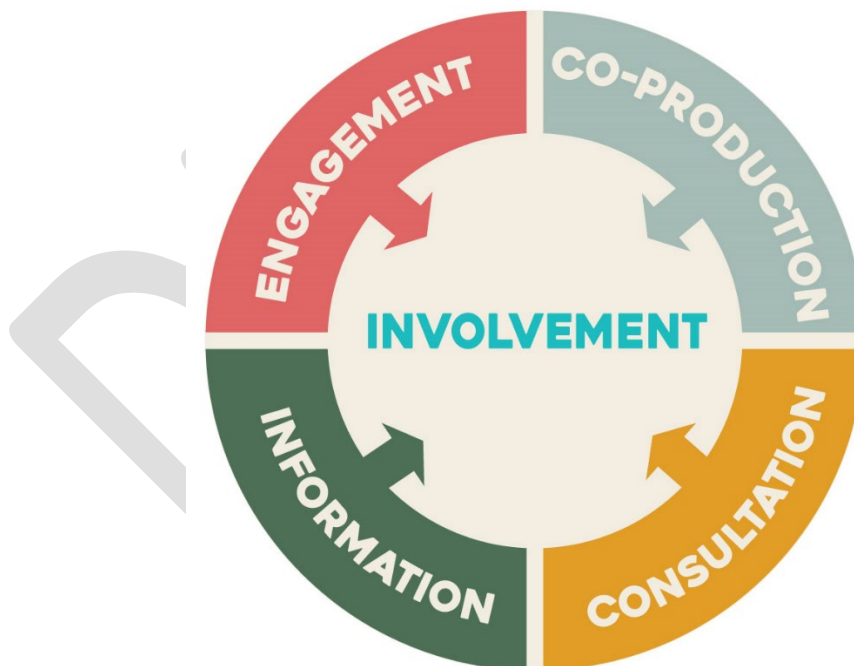
## 7. Evaluate and improve.

- Check the effectiveness of any involvement activity.
- Use local demographic data including accessibility, equality and diversity to identify gaps for future improvement.
- Share findings, processes and learning amongst services and partners.

## What is Involvement?

Involvement can mean different things to different people and can cover a range of approaches.

This strategy outlines four levels of Involvement: Information, Engaging, Consulting, and Co-producing. All of these levels can be achieved through a range of delivery methods.



Providing Information – At its simplest form, this approach involves giving people information in order to raise awareness. This is the easiest and most straight forward level of involvement.

Consultation – A formal process providing the opportunity for people to feedback their views and opinions on specific questions, policies or service changes.

Engagement – Seen as a more participative process, with an ongoing conversation,

using different methods to listen to ideas that will influence and shape the development of policy and service change.

Co-Production - Working with people and communities in equal partnership to develop and deliver services that matter together, recognising that everyone has a contribution to make

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the levels of involvement will vary from service to service and the approaches taken will vary based on the type of decision being made, timescales and the resources available. We need to further develop and improve our engagement and co-production levels of involvement, looking at the best practice that already exists.

## Who we will Involve

We will involve a wide range of stakeholders in our involvement activities, including the following:

*Note: final Strategy will be designed rather than list stakeholders.*

Businesses	Residents	Young people
Carers	Forums eg. - Disability Forum - Older Persons Forums - Health Forums	Elected representatives - Councillors - MP's/SMs
Community Groups	Neighbourhood Networks	Leisure For Life users
Service users & families	Third Sector Partners	Parents / Guardians
Staff	Trade Unions	Town and Community Councils
Visitors	Welsh language groups	Underrepresented Groups



## How can people get involved?

There are many ways in which people can get involved, such as;

Online	Offline	Both
Online survey	Paper / hardcopy survey	Council Committee meetings
Social media (Facebook / Instagram)	Face to face in the community	Citizens' Panel
Email/website	Telephone call	Easy Read/Plan English Documents
Online meeting / forum / focus group	Meeting / forum / focus group (in person)	
<a href="#">Let's Talk</a> (polls / ideas / survey)	Community events / groups	

## The Drivers of Involvement.....

The Council is committed to working with its residents and communities as the views we receive help us in our development of policy and service change. However, there are also a number of relevant standards and principles that inform our approach across the Council, these include;

- Participation Cymru's [National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales](#)
- [Children and Young People's National Participation Standards \(2016\)](#); and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) – says that Local Authorities must put in place transparent arrangements where people are equal partners in designing and operating services
- [The Local Government \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) – places a duty on councils to promote and encourage participation in council decision-making. It does this by placing requirements on all principal councils to prepare and publish a public participation strategy.
- [The Equalities Act \(2010\) and The Public Sector Equality Duty](#):
- [Welsh Language Standards](#) in particular standards 44, 91, 92 and 93
- [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) asks public bodies to work better with people, communities and each other to meet the Sustainable Development principle, i.e. the process of improving the social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of residents.

To deliver the Sustainable Development principle, the Act sets out 5 ways of working,

- **Involvement of those with an interest in our plans and seek their views**
- Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future
- Collaborating with others to deliver objectives
- Considering the impact on all well-being goals together and on other bodies by integrating our plans and policies etc.,
- Putting resources into prevention so that problems don't occur or get worse

By implementing this Strategy, we will help services to embed 'Involvement' into their plans and arrangements and so enable to the Council to meet its requirements under the Act.

We also have a number of Rhondda Cynon Taf Strategies that align with our approach, some of which have already been mentioned, these include;

- The Corporate Plan – commits to putting residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful involvement and engagement.
- The Public Participation Strategy - sets out how the council will comply with the new duties set out under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act in order to promote and encourage participation in council decision-making.
- The Strategic Equality Plan – developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and how we will meet legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.
- Youth Engagement & Participation Service - committed to developing a culture of young person's participation by engaging and listening to young people. The aim is to use young people's feedback to inform internal services' and external partners' developments.

## Measuring Success

The Involvement Strategy sets out the overarching vision and 7 objectives that Council services will need to work towards. The associated actions will be used to develop an action plan, that will be found in an Appendix to this Strategy once the appropriate consultation and feedback has been received.

We will also link in with existing Council Strategies that already have Involvement actions within them, for example the Strategic Equality Plan has an objective to monitor engagement and consultation activity and review and improve communication methods to residents ensuring accessible versions such as BSL, Easy Read and non-digital formats.

Our progress in delivering the objectives will be subject to annual internal review to establish progress towards the relevant short-term actions. Delivery of the objectives will be led by a senior officer, but they will depend on all our services working together to improve involvement across the board.

Progress can also be considered, as part of the Council's performance arrangements. Services are required to submit Delivery plans, which they shape and inform Council policy and strategy. These plans ask services how they will apply the sustainable development principles to service priorities, including Involvement. All Service Delivery Plans are monitored by the Group Director and Cabinet Member as part of the Council's performance management arrangements.

In addition to Service Delivery Plans we have a well-established and effective self-assessment process in place, which focuses on impact and outcomes of the services being delivered, it leads to improvements in the experiences and the outcomes for our customers. 3 questions are asked;

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we improve things further?

These questions are often informed by public consultation and engagement and we can monitor these plans where involvement is recorded.

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