

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

Involvement & Engagement Framework

2020-2024

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 arrangements and future plans. 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 where we can improve so that more people can get involved in the decisions that affect them and their families.

This Framework provides an overview of the ways that the Council will inform, engage and consult with and involve people who live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf in the decisions that affect them. The Framework builds on our progress to date and outlines how we will improve our involvement with our residents and key stakeholders over the next three years.

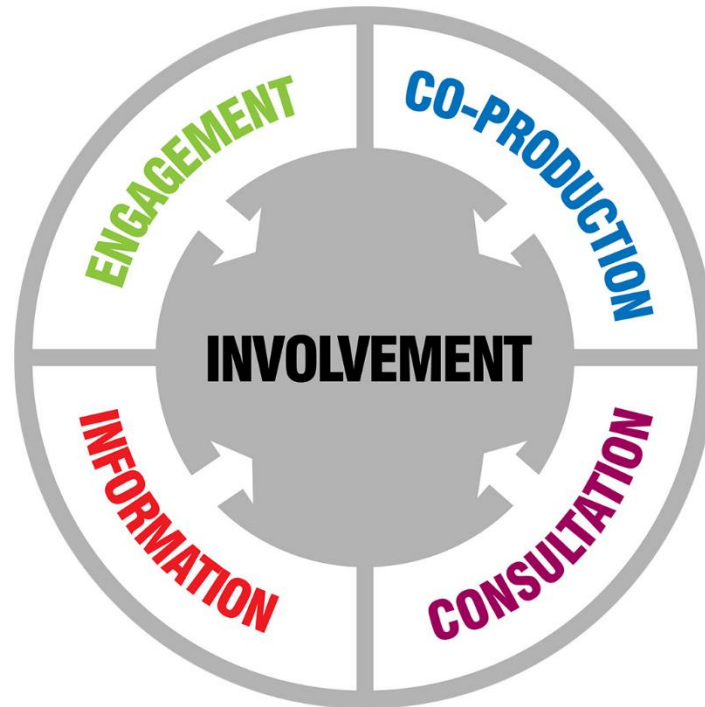
The Framework provides overarching guidance to Council services and partner organisations on how to involve stakeholders in decision making and ensure that the voices of people and communities are heard. There are a number of links and documents throughout the Framework that provide more detailed guidance.

What is Involvement? – Why is it important?

Involvement can mean different things to different people and can cover a range of approaches. This Framework focuses on four levels of Involvement: *Providing Information, Consulting, Engaging* and *Co-producing*. All of these levels can be achieved through a range of delivery methods

1. Providing Information - giving people information in order to raise awareness. This is the easiest and most straight forward level of involvement.
2. Consulting - providing the opportunity for people to feedback their views and opinions on specific questions, policies or service changes.
3. Engaging – seen as a more participative process through which people can influence and shape policies and service changes earlier.
4. Co-producing – is about developing plans in an equal partnership of residents and professionals to design, plan and deliver support together, recognising that everyone has a contribution to make.

The Council recognises the importance of developing more co-productive approaches to involvement, where individuals and communities are offered opportunities to contribute and shape decision making at all stages of any project.



The Drivers of Involvement

The Council is committed to working with its residents and communities but it is the right thing to do. We have also committed to implementing relevant standards and principles that inform our approach. The standards 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 Older People's Commissioner - [Effective Engagement with Local Authorities: Toolkit for Older People](#)
- The [Equalities Act \(2010\) - Engagement and Equality Duty](#): A guide for public authorities
- [Welsh Language Standards](#) in particular standards 44, 91, 92 and 93
- [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 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. [The Council's approach to the implementation of the Act agreed by Cabinet](#) is to make sure that its requirements are embedded into the everyday business, this includes this Framework.

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

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

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

"Involvement requires organisations to be open to influence from citizens and stakeholders, moving to a culture of 'working with' rather than 'doing to'. In contrast to consultation, involvement approaches work with people at earlier stages, such as helping to identify issues and potential solutions, and being supported to remain involved right throughout design, implementation and evaluation processes". [A Journey to Involvement 2019](#)

What we will do....

Strengthen the culture of involvement by

- enabling and embedding involvement across the Council and its services
- ensuring that when we make decisions we take account of people's views
- working towards the FG Commissioners Journey to involvement
- including involvement in all Council Delivery Plans and Council reports
- using the Scrutiny function to validate involvement

Make sure our Involvement is focused and has a purpose by

- providing enough time, space and resources for meaningful involvement
- involving people at the earliest opportunity
- using more innovative methods as well as those that are tried and tested
- working more closely with residents, including those that are seldom heard

Make it easy for everyone to be involved by

- putting in place an inclusive approach, considering the involvement of all groups which includes the protected characteristics groups
- providing more opportunities and using a variety of accessible formats
- talking to people in their communities
- keeping it Simple by using plain English and Welsh language
- making text jargon free and easy to read, using graphics and animations
- having information/people available to help people to better understand

Streamline our involvement requests by

- using existing groups and stakeholders
- working across services to maximise the opportunities for involvement and make best use of resources

- co ordinating how and when we involve people so that residents are not overwhelmed with information or frustrated by multiple requests
- working with the Cwm Taf PSB and other partners to improve joint planning and working

Train and enable staff so that they have the skills they need by

- signposting them to the relevant training where necessary
- investing in training for involvement and engagement skills to ensure effective involvement techniques are used
- promoting involvement guidance to staff

Provide feedback to people about how their views have been used by

- providing updates on our website
- making sure this views are reflected in Council reports
- providing feedback in different ways so that it meets the needs of different audiences
- showing how views have been used through a “You said, we did” approach

Evaluate what have done so that we can improve in future by

- checking the effectiveness of the activity
- sharing findings, processes and learning amongst services and partners
- sharing with national organisations to influence national policy and decision making

Who to involve?

The people and groups that services are likely to involve include;

- *Generally all residents through face to face, web and social media*
- *Young people e.g. through [The Rhondda Cynon Taf Youth Forum](#) and through schools*
- *Older People e.g. through the [‘Fiftyplus’ Older People’s Forum](#)*
- *The RCT Disability Forum*
- *[The Council’s Citizens’ Panel](#)*
- *[Local Partnerships and Communities Together ‘PACT’ meetings Health Forums](#)*
- *Service User Groups e.g. Transport, [Carers](#)*
- *[Community/Voluntary groups](#)*
- *Welsh language Groups*
- *Other Stakeholders dependent on the topic of involvement*
- *Community and Town Councils*
- *Councillors, MP’s, AM’s*
- *Businesses*

Measuring Success

The success of this Framework will be reflected in the quantity and quality of feedback from our residents, communities and stakeholders. Many of the Council's measures of success derive from the information from our residents in either quantitative or qualitative measures. Engagement activity should be continually reviewed to include.

- **Suitability of Engagement** e.g. Was the method appropriate? Was the timing right? Did we engage with the right people?
- **What did we learn from the Engagement?** e.g. What did the residents tell us? How has this been fed back to the relevant services? How has the feed-back been used to inform/shape services or policy decisions?
- **Have the contributors been told how their views have been used?** e.g. as part of ongoing dialogue, as part of specific consultation arrangements, regular updates.

[Guidance](#) has been produced by Participation Cymru

The measures that will help us to see the success of this Framework include

- % of people who feel they can influence Council decisions (National Survey for Wales)
- The number of people that respond to surveys or get involved in other engagement opportunities.

For further information please contact the Consultation Team

consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

@cwmtafconsult