Mi allwch ddarllen y ddogfen yma yn Gymraeg hefyd. Ewch nôl i'r dudalen we, a chliciwch ar y botwm iaith ar dop y dudalen.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Participation Strategy 2023

Foreword

It is my pleasure to present Cyngor Gwynedd's First Participation Strategy to you.

The People of Gwynedd are at the core of every decision we make. We have been elected to represent you and to do our best for the people of Gwynedd. In order to serve you we need to hear your views; this is an integral part of the democratic process. We regulary face having to make challenging decisions, and not all decisions will please everyone. As leaders in the community, it is our duty to consider all points of view and aim to make the best decision in everyone's interests.

Our first Strategy aims to outline what is currently in place to listen to the voices of local people, and what is to be developed further. There is much more that can be done in the future, and the Strategy will be reviewed regularly. I am confident that this first Strategy gives a firm foundation on which to build to the future.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Menna Jones,
Corporate Support Cabinet Member.

Introduction

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, local authorities in Wales must publish a Participation Strategy which notes the ways that local people are encouraged to participate in the Council's decision-making process.

It is expected that the strategy will evolve and improve over time as good practices emerge and as further technological advances are made.

This Strategy outlines Cyngor Gwynedd's aim of encouraging people to participate in the decision-making process. In this strategy, we have attempted to explain how our objectives in terms of participation will make a genuine difference to the way we engage with people in Gwynedd. Within every objective, we have identified clear outcomes and actions.

This is our first strategy and its implementation will be kept under review.

Our Duties in terms of Participation and Associated Policies

Our aim is to be open and responsive to the needs of the residents and communities of Gwynedd. This will give local people an opportunity to influence policies and services and to shape them. Our objective is to create a culture of partnership with the public which encourages expressing views and contributions.

We put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do and this strategy supports the objective by embedding public participation in the Council's decision-making processes. This is central to the ethos of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Participation entails sharing decisions with those who will be affected by the decisions, and it must be an integral part of our work. Our aim is to say what we intend to do, and to hear residents' opinion about the idea. Participation can include a wide range of different approaches and techniques, and the Council or residents can suggest them. It must be borne in mind that there is an opportunity to include formal arrangements such as consultations that are followed in fields such as planning and education.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a number of duties on local authorities in terms of participation. Namely:

1. Promoting awareness of the functions that the Council deliver for local residents and businesses and for visitors.
2. Sharing information on how to become an elected Member or a Councillor, and what the role of a Councillor entails.
3. Ensuring that information on decisions that have been made, or which are to be made by the Council, are more easily accessible.
4. Offering and promoting opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the Council, including observations, complaints.
5. Promoting awareness of the advantages of using social media to communicate with residents for Councillors.

However, it does not mean that we agree with every comment expressed, and we must always act within restrictions such as the law and financial restrictions.

Our Objectives

1. Promoting awareness of the functions that the Council deliver for local residents and businesses and for visitors.

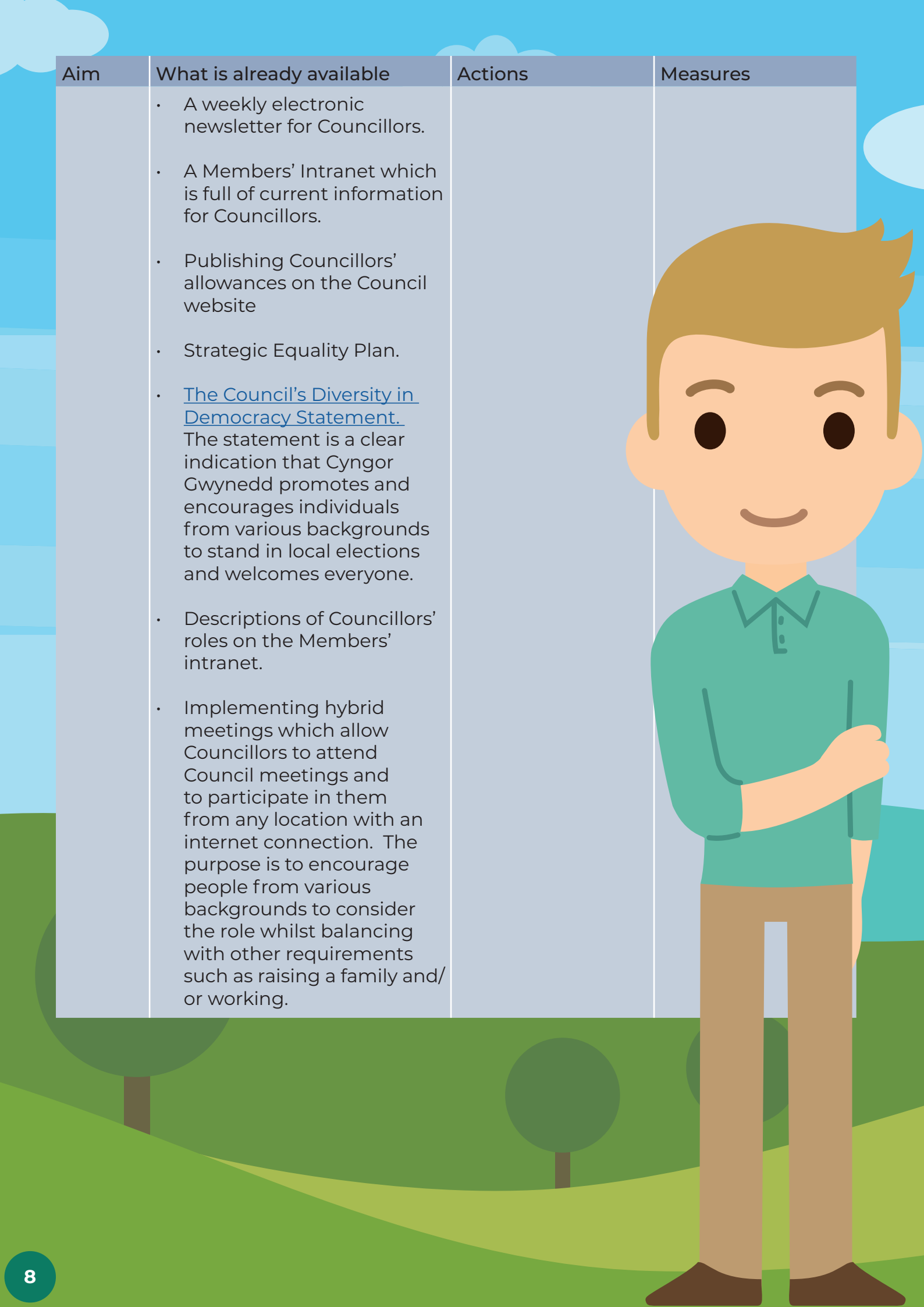
Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
The aim of this objective is to share information about the Council's functions and services so that residents are informed about them. Sharing information about the Council's functions will help the public to consider and understand matters before giving their opinion or recommendations.	• The Council website. The Council website includes a lot of information about the functions of the Council and what it delivers for local residents, businesses and for visitors. • Social Media. • Council Plan, the Council's policies and strategies are available for the public on the Council's website and are easy to read • Newyddion Gwynedd - newsletter for Gwynedd residents • Live-streaming Council meetings for the public to watch.	• Review the content and structure of the Council's website regularly to ensure that information is easily accessible. • Ensure that the Council Plan supports engagement with the public by being accessible, timely and easy to read. • Review the content of the forward programme of the Full Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny regularly and publish them so that the information is available to the public. • Publish the guidelines of the constitution on the website so that residents are aware of the democratic arrangements of the Council.	• Number of people who watch meetings including live meetings and archived ones. • Data on the number of people using the website. • Satisfaction survey on the website. • Responding to consultations.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
	• The Council's Committees agendas and minutes can be seen on-line. • Council Meetings. • Cabinet Meetings. • Consultations.		

2. Sharing information on how to become a Councillor, and what the role of a Councillor entails.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
This objective focuses on encouraging people to become Councillors, representing people in their own communities and making decision on their behalf. It is important that a diverse range of people are Councillors, to represent the entire community and make decisions which are in everyone's interests.	• 'Being a Councillor' page on the website and other relevant pages explain the role of a Councillor and how to stand in an election. • Information on the website also includes information about the care reimbursements etc. • A full training programme to support Councillor throughout their time in the role. • Regular Information Sessions and Area Forums for Councillors to ensure that they receive the latest information about developments and are included in them.	• Ensure that information for prospective councillors is available and fit for purpose; • Hold question and answer sessions for those considering being a Councillor before the put their names forward. • Consult with existing Councillors to assess how to improve the provision and attract more individuals from varied background to stand as Councillors. • Amend the 'Being a Councillor' webpage in order to include provisions which support the ability to fulfil the role.	• Equality and diversity data for elected Members.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
	• A weekly electronic newsletter for Councillors. • A Members' Intranet which is full of current information for Councillors. • Publishing Councillors' allowances on the Council website • Strategic Equality Plan. • The Council's Diversity in Democracy Statement. The statement is a clear indication that Cyngor Gwynedd promotes and encourages individuals from various backgrounds to stand in local elections and welcomes everyone. • Descriptions of Councillors' roles on the Members' intranet. • Implementing hybrid meetings which allow Councillors to attend Council meetings and to participate in them from any location with an internet connection. The purpose is to encourage people from various backgrounds to consider the role whilst balancing with other requirements such as raising a family and/ or working.		



3. Ensuring that information on decisions that have been made, or which are to be made by the Council, are more easily accessible.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
This objective focuses on encouraging and enabling individuals to contribute to fields which affect them, if they so wish. This could be as an individual or as part of a group or community, with their views respected and appreciated.	• Website - democracy section on the website where residents can see meeting agendas, minutes and decisions. Decision notices are published noting all decisions and recommendations taken by all the Council's formal committees, being the Council, Cabinet, Committees of sub-committees, and the information is published within 5 clear working days of the meeting. This provides a way of sharing i mportant information about decisions taken without the need to wait for the full minutes.	• Continue to develop our methods of engaging with the residents of Gwynedd. • Build on the use of technology to increase the reach of engagement e.g. using public Wi-Fi to promote surveys. • We will create an action plan in order to develop clear arrangements on how the public can contribute their comments on key decisions over the next year.	• Number of people who watch meetings including live meetings and archived ones. • Participation rates in consultations and surveys.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
	• Consultation and surveys on the website as they arise. • Social Media – sharing any update on the Council's work. • Newyddion Gwynedd. • The Council works with specific groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and that a range of viewpoints are heard. • The Council engages regularly with Gwynedd residents on key corporate decisions e.g. Council Tax Premium. • The Council has regular mechanisms to engage with the public including on-line surveys. • Publish the forward programme of the Cabinet and all Scrutiny Committees.		

4. Offering and promoting opportunities for residents to provide feedback to the Council, including observations, complaints and other types of comments.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
This objective focuses on participation, which is much more than seeking people's views on a particular matter. Participation involves encouraging people to take part in community and political activities using different engagement methods.	• Website - Complaints and Feedback Page • Gwynedd on-line Selfservice. • Praise, Concerns and Complaints Policy • Consultation and surveys on the Council's website (with paper copies also available) – see the 'have your say' page which includes the results of surveys. • Newyddion Gwynedd. • Democracy section on the website where residents can see meeting agendas and minutes, and decisions.	• Report to the Cabinet on complaints and feedback received from residents. • Develop a better understanding of the demography of residents who provide feedback regularly, so that any gaps in representation can be identified. • Measure the progress of implementing this strategy in a timely manner and report to the relevant committee. • Adopt a Petitions Scheme. • We will create an action plan in order to develop clear arrangements on how the public can contribute their comments on key decisions over the next year.	• Number of comments, complaints and praise received. • Participation rates in consultations and surveys • Monitor equality and diversity data involving residents who have provided feedback. • Participation and engagement levels in terms of the scrutiny process. • Number of responses to consultations. • Number of people who watch meetings including live meetings and archived ones on the website. • Number of petitions submitted on-line.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
	• The Council works with specific groups to ensure that information about decisions is shared, and that a range of viewpoints are heard. • A page for the public to submit matters to be Scrutinised on the website. • An opportunity for the public to submit a question to the Full Council. • Publish the forward programme of the Cabinet and Scrutiny.	• Promote our current arrangements for the public to submit a question to the Full Council or a matter to be scrutinised. • Identify feedback and participation in decisions in our decision-making arrangements.	

5. Promoting awareness of the advantages of using social media to communicate with residents for Councillors.

Aim	What is already available	Actions	Measures
This objective recognises that social media is a place where councillors share political information and engage with other councillors and residents. Social media have the potential to improve democracy by facilitating open and honest conversations and by enabling Councillors to communicate directly with residents.	• Social Media Training - and how to use social media safely and appropriately and raise Councillor's awareness of the risk of using social media and the need to use various ways of communicating. • Welsh Local Government Association A Guide for Councillors - 'Improving Digital Citizenship - Research and Best Practice.' Social Media Guidelines. Councillors' guide to handling intimidation.	• Induction for new Councillors following an election and/or by-election. • Training Councillors and continuing to adapt the training programme to respond to how society and the world has changed. • Hold additional sessions if the need arises as a result of a review of personal training by Councillors.	• % in terms of completing training modules. • % in terms of attendance at relevant Seminars and training for Members.

The Results of the Consultation

A consultation was held as part of the work of developing this Strategy with the results contributing to the content and format of the document.

Click on the link to see the results: Report

Definitions

These working definitions are informed by the 'Practitioners' Guide for Public Engagement;' (Participation Cymru, 2012).

Engage / Engagement: An active and participatory process in which people can influence policies and services and shape them which includes a wide range of different approaches and techniques.

Consultation: A formal process in which policy makers and service providers ask for the views of the public, groups and interested individuals.

Participate / Participation: People being actively involved with policy makers and service planners from the early stages of planning and reviewing policies and services.

Additional Information

- Petitions scheme
- Guide on the Democracy Process (to be developed)
- Guide to the Constitution
- Give your Views page
- Comments, Praise and Complaints Policy
- Contacting your Local Councillor

Partnership Arrangements

Cyngor Gwynedd is a key partner of the Gwynedd and Môn Public Services Board.

The Public Services Board was set up in the wake of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (Sharing a Purpose: Sharing a Future) in order to ensure sustainable developments while fulfilling the seven well-being aims.

The sustainable development principle considers the five ways of working that public bodies must implement to show that they apply the principle.

Members include representative of private, public and voluntary sectors in Gwynedd and Môn. The PSB is committed to seeking the views of residents on all policies and decisions made, and how we can make improvements in the future.

Gwynedd and Môn Public Services Board (llesiantgwyneddamon.org)

Relevant Legislation and Policy

- Council Plan
- Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- Welsh Government Equality and Inclusion Programme

    - Welsh Government - Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24
    - Welsh Government (Senedd according to the report) Diversity in Local Government Survey, Nov 2018
    - Action Plan: Year 1 - 2020-2021 - Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments in Wales

- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Participation Cymru – National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales
- Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010
- National Participation Standards in Wales