

Councillor Lyndon Jones
Convener
Scrutiny Working Group – Public
Engagement

SENT BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
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Our Ref: RS/JW
Your Ref:
Date: 18 March 2025

Dear Councillor Jones

Thank you for your detailed letter regarding the Scrutiny Working Group's discussion on Public Engagement. We appreciate your insights and recommendations. Below, please find our responses to each of the nine recommendations:

1. Consulting with Underrepresented Groups

We fully recognise the importance of consulting with underrepresented groups and are actively exploring methods to enhance our consultation outreach at a corporate level. Councillors play a pivotal role in these efforts; as community leaders, we will be writing out to all Councillors requesting contact details for any relevant groups within their constituencies. Our Integrated Impact Assessment process identifies which communities are affected by proposals or policy decisions, informing the engagement process and approach. We provide comprehensive guidance to officers to enhance the consultation process across the Council. We will keep the Committee updated on our progress in this area at a corporate level.

2. Utilisation of Pupil Forums

We agree that pupil forums could be an effective avenue for circulating questionnaires and conducting consultations. We will explore this possibility further with Education and if we are able establish a framework for integrating pupil forums into our consultation processes.

3. Leveraging Councillor Networks

The suggestion to utilise the networks of Councillors for sharing and encouraging Council consultations is highly valuable. We will develop a strategy to better engage Councillors in our consultation efforts, leveraging their extensive networks and social media presence.

4. Data Cymru Survey Results

We acknowledge your interest in the results of the Data Cymru survey. Once the analysis is complete, we will share the findings appropriately. Currently, we are unable to provide benchmarking data as it remains confidential to the other Councils that have taken part. We are collaborating with Data Cymru to find ways to share these significant figures.

5. Examples of Coproduction

Our Coproduction Strategy has been established, accompanied by a toolkit designed to assist staff in adopting co-productive approaches. Service areas independently chose where to implement this strategy. Recent examples which the panel may wish to examine by speaking to the relevant officers include:

Domestic Abuse Strategy – Janine Evans

Tackling Poverty Strategy – Lee Cambule

6. Reintroduction of Focus Groups

The suggestion to reintroduce focus groups is noted. Focus groups serve as effective instruments for in-depth discussions on particular matters. Focus groups are usually more suited at a service level, particularly when there are changes in service delivery. It is recommended that services conduct face-to-face engagement whenever resources and time permit.

Furthermore, within the Council, there are existing mechanisms that support face-to-face engagement opportunities. These mechanisms ensure that community members and stakeholders have chances to participate actively and provide feedback on various issues. We will work to promote established mechanisms internally so service can utilise these opportunities.

7. Digital Exclusion and Paper Copies

Digital exclusion is a matter we take very seriously. Currently, we provide paper copies of our key surveys in our libraries. We promote the availability of these paper copies when advertising the surveys through various methods detailed within the report. There has been a notable reduction in the number of paper copies returned, as the vast majority of respondents participate online. We continuously seek ways to improve and will explore enhanced advertising strategies to ensure that individuals affected by digital exclusion have opportunities to engage.

8. Ward Profiles and Face-to-Face Opportunities

This would apply more to service specific consultations. Ward profiles are available and used within the IIA process to help shape the engagement. We will write out to all departments to ensure these profiles are considered when planning engagement activity.

9. Simplifying Survey Preambles

We recognise the need for simplifying the preamble at the beginning of surveys, especially for the budget survey. Our team will work on refining these introductions to make them more concise and user-friendly.

Thank you once again for your invaluable recommendations. We look forward to continued collaboration to enhance public engagement and ensure the voices of our community are heard and valued.

Yours sincerely



**Y CYNGHORYDD/COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
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