

CONSULTATION RESPONSES – PUBLIC

Summary of responses:

1. A total of 144 respondents participated in this consultation. Not all questions were answered by all respondents. The majority of respondents 62.7% (86) were aged 55 and over with the under 24's accounting for only 5.8% (8) of the respondents. The consultation was undertaken by approximately equal numbers of men/male 49.3% (67) and women/female 47.8% (65) with a small number identifying as "other" 0.7% (1) or preferred not to say 2.2% (3).
2. Approximately 20% of respondents identified themselves as a disabled person with many having a long-standing illness or health condition 50.0% (36). The majority of respondents described themselves as having Mental Health difficulties 27.8% (20), were Deaf, Deafened or Hard of hearing 23.6% (17) or had mobility impairments 22.2% (16) which accounted for a majority of the disabilities. A smaller number of respondents described themselves as having visual impairment 9.7% (7), Learning impairment/ difficulties 6.9% (5) or were a wheelchair user 4.2% (3).

Comment:

The consultation was undertaken by a diverse range of respondents.

3. **Current Engagement and observation**

- a. Only 18.7% (25) respondents currently engage or observe meetings of the Council or its committees. Over 80% of respondents currently **do not** engage or observe meetings with the main reason being that they do not know where to find the information for meetings (67.3%).

Comment:

Identify how meeting information can be made more easily available to potential observers i.e. providing easier access to meeting information on the council's internet website, use regular social media posts (1 per month) with links to calendar of meeting webpage for the month.

- b. Of the 18% (25) of respondents that indicated that they do engage with council meetings, only 8% (2) would only expect to attend in person. The remainder would either view the live stream 64% (16) or archived webcast 48% (12) with 20% (5) using both live stream and archived webcast.
- c. A larger number of respondents (137) indicated that if they wanted to engage or observe meeting their preferred option was primarily by using virtual arrangements 74.5 % (102) with 25.5% (35) wishing to attend in person

Comment:

The proposed plans for physical attendance of public at meetings in the Multi-location meetings policy will support the requirements of those who wish to attend public meetings in person.

4. Meetings Observed

The 26 respondents indicated that the meetings they had engaged or observed were primarily Council (64%), Planning Committee (40%), Cabinet (32%) and Scrutiny (32%) meetings. Standards and Ethics Committee (12%) and the Governance and Audit Committee (4%) had a significantly less engagement with only the Licensing Sub-Committee (4%) being identified as another committee that had been observed.

Many of the respondent 17 (65%) engaged with or observed two or more committees

Comment:

The responses support the plans for webcasting of meetings.

5. Barriers to attending meetings**a. In Person**

The consultation identified that 29.4% (10) respondents had no barriers to attending a meeting in person. The timings of the meetings (19) 55.9%) was identified as the largest barrier to attending a meeting in person with 20.6% identifying health concerns or accessibility issues. Financial implications relating to travel, time off work, and childcare were identified by 8.8% (3) respondents.

b. Virtually

The majority 75.2% (76) of the 101 respondents to this question had no issues with engaging or observing a meeting virtually. It should be noted that none of the respondents who identified meeting timings as a barrier to a physical meeting responded that they had “no issues” virtual meeting barriers.

ICT barriers relating to: access to relevant internet access, devices and software were identified by 8% (8) respondents.

Of these only one respondent (1%) identified that they had no access to internet services, lacked a suitable device or relevant software to engage or observe meetings and could be considered digitally excluded if they had not responded to this online survey.

Barriers to privacy including being identified in a public meeting and lack of quiet / private space to participate in the meeting were indicated by 18% (18) of respondents.

A number of respondents identified other barriers which included:

- the timings of meetings and their availability to attend virtually 4% (4).
- the availability of a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter

Comment:

Although a significant majority of respondents were satisfied with attending meetings virtually, some work will be needed to identify how the barriers can be reduced which may include:

- considering the timings of meetings for public participants and observers in the survey of meeting timings undertaken by committees following the Local Government Elections in 2022.
- The intention to provide publicly available software for Multi-Location meeting will address some of these barriers.
- Digital exclusion is an ongoing concern which may be addressed as part of the Council's Participation Strategy which is being developed.
- Barriers for the Deaf community may be addressed with further development of a mobile conferencing system. However, appropriate funding will need to be identified to deliver picture in picture signing and for the provision of BSL Interpreters.

Serial	Question	Responses
1.	Do you currently engage or observe meetings of Council and/or its committees?	No (113) 81.9% Yes (25) 18.1%
2.	If yes, how do you do this?	Viewing the Live-stream (15) 62.5% Archived Webcast (12) 50.0% In person (7) 29.2%
3.	If no, what stops you?	Don't know where to find the information about these meetings (74) 67.3% Other (21) 19.1% Not interested (15) 13.6% Don't have access to the internet (0)
4.	Which committees do you observe?	Council (16) 64.0% Planning Committee (10) 40.0% Cabinet (8) 32.0% Scrutiny Committees (8) 32.0% Standards & Ethics Committee (3) 12.0% Governance & Audit Committee (1) 4.0% Other - Licensing Sub Committee (1) 4.0%
5.	If you wanted to engage with or observe a meeting, how would you prefer to attend?	Virtually (e.g. Teams, Zoom or similar platform) (102) 74.5% In person (35) 25.5%
6.	What would be your barriers to attending in person?	The timings of the meetings (19) 55.9% No issues (10) 29.4% Health concerns (4) 11.8% Accessibility issues (3) 8.8% Financial implications (e.g. travel, time off work, childcare) (3) 8.8% Other (-)
7.	What would your barriers be to attending virtually?	No issues (76) 75.2% Concerns around being identified in a public meeting (14) 13.9% Lack of quiet / private space to participate in the meeting (9) 8.9% No access to relevant software to join the meeting (5) 5.0%

Serial	Question	Responses
		Other (5) 5.0% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Information regarding how to access obscured by officers. Timing of meetings around work schedule ii. Time of the meeting due to work iii. Concern if BSL interpreter available iv. Not being available on the day v. Time Lack of suitable device (3) 3.0% No access to internet services (3) 3.0%
8.	What was your age on your last birthday?	65-74 (38) 27.7% 55-64 (33) 24.1% 45-54 (16) 11.7% 75+ (15) 10.9% 35-44 (14) 10.2% 25-34 (9) 6.6% Under 16 (4) 2.9% 16-24 (4) 2.9% Prefer not to say (4) 2.9%
9.	Are you...?	Male (67) 49.3% Female (65) 47.8% Prefer not to say (3) 2.2% Other (1) 0.7%
10.	Do you identify as Trans?	No (126) 93.3% Prefer not to say (7) 5.2% Yes (2) 1.5% Prefer to self-describe (0)
11.	Do you identify as a disabled person?	No (104) 75.9% Yes (27) 19.7% Prefer not to say (6) 4.4%
12.	Please tick any of the following that apply to you	Long-standing illness or health condition (e.g. cancer, asthma) (36) 50.0% Mental health difficulties (20) 27.8% Deaf/ Deafened/ Hard of hearing (17) 23.6%

Serial	Question	Responses
		Mobility impairment (16) 22.2% Prefer not to say (8) 11.1% Visual impairment (7) 9.7% Learning impairment/ difficulties (5) 6.9% Other (5) 6.9% Wheelchair user (3) 4.2%
13.	Do you consider yourself to be Welsh?	Yes (87) 67.4% No (42) 32.6%
14.	What is your ethnic group? Where the term 'British' is used, this refers to any of the four home nations of Wales, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland, or any combination of these.	White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (114) 82.6% White - Any other white background (6) 4.3% Prefer not to say (4) 2.9% Asian/Asian Welsh/British – Pakistani (3) 2.2% Asian/Asian Welsh/British - Indian (3) 2.2% Asian/Asian Welsh/British - Any other (3) 2.2% White - Irish (2) 1.4% Any other ethnic group (please specify) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups - White and Black Caribbean (1) 0.7%