

# Ceredigion Engagement and Participation Policy 'Talking, Listening and Working Together'

## Annual Report 2024-2025



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Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council



# Ceredigion Engagement and Participation Annual Report 2024-2025

This report describes the work undertaken by the Council during 2024-25 to deliver our Engagement and Participation Policy.

## Why Engage?

We adopted our Engagement and Participation Policy in October 2022. Engagement helps us improve our services. It lets people know what the Council does and how we set our priorities and policies. It helps us to explain what services we can and cannot provide.

Our legal duty to engage and consult is set out in various pieces of legislation, including:

- [The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) – the Council must involve people with an interest in achieving the National Well-being goals.
- [The Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) – the Council must encourage public participation in our decision making and to consult local people about the extent to which the council is exercising its functions effectively.
- [The Welsh Language Measure 2011](#) – the Council must ask the public for their views on the impact that our decisions will have on the Welsh Language.
- [The Equality Act 2010](#) – the Council must involve and engage with people who share Protected Characteristics.
- [The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders \(Procedure\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 1996](#) – the Council must consult with organisations specified in the Regulations and must inform people that are likely to be affected by a traffic order.
- [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) – the Council must comply with the School Organisation Code which outlines the principles that should be taken into account when proposing to make changes to school provision.

- We are also guided by ‘The Gunning Principles’. These set out the legal expectations of what is appropriate consultation with an emphasis on ‘fairness’. The principles can be used in court to determine whether a public body has shown fairness in its engagement, consultations and decision making. The principles also give a good practical framework for public engagement.

The Gunning Principles are:

- Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage.
- Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response.
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
- The product of consultation must be conscientiously considered when finalising the decision

## What is Participation?

This means actively taking part in specific activities or events. In the context of local democracy, it involves actions like voting, attending meetings, or joining community groups. There are various ways that people can participate in council business.

We promote Council activities via social media, Facebook, X and Instagram, and through press releases.

**Total number of followers on all Corporate social media accounts: 34,412**

Our Overview and Scrutiny Committees bring together groups of County Councillors that examine the various functions of the council. They ask questions about how decisions have been made and make recommendations for improvement. The meetings are open to the public and members of the public can suggest topics for Scrutiny Committees to examine.

**Total number of topics for Scrutiny suggested by members of the public: 0**

People can join Council meetings online or in person. Council and Cabinet meetings are shown live and can be viewed online at the time or after the meeting. The number of people that view Council meetings varies greatly depending on the topic.

**Number of online views (live plus on demand) of Council meetings: 45 to 1,542**

We are preparing for the Welsh Government election in May 2026. We want to make sure that everyone knows about the election and how to register to vote if they haven't already done so. We especially want to talk with people who we know are underrepresented on the electoral register. We are developing a timetable of workshops sessions with various groups to help with this.

## What is Engagement?

This includes participation but it's about the ongoing relationship and interaction. It involves building a connection, staying informed, giving feedback, and being part of continuous dialogue.

The Council coordinates a range of stakeholder groups, for example, Ceredigion Disability Forum, Ceredigion Local Access Forum, Ceredigion Bilingual Futures Forum, Ceredigion Age Friendly Forum and Ceredigion Youth Council. We meet regularly and talk about a range of issues of particular interest to the Council and to members of the groups. This helps us to develop our services.

Clic, our customer contact service, handles approximately 10,000 enquiries per month. In 2024 we introduced a new feature; when an enquiry is closed and the customer has an email address, a closure email is sent with a link to a feedback survey. The survey asks three questions:

1. How would you rate the service you received for this enquiry? (Scale 1-10)
2. What are we doing well and why?
3. What could we improve?

So far, we have received 243 responses, with an average rating of 7.37. We can review any survey response to identify issues and improve our services.

While we haven't found direct benchmarking data yet, we know that high-performing private sector companies typically score 8.

## Engagement campaigns 2024-2025

We undertook nine specific engagement campaigns between April 2024 and March 2025.

### 1. Growing Mid Wales: Digital Business Connectivity Survey

In April/May 2024 we asked businesses in Mid Wales how suitable the current digital infrastructure is for their current operations and future requirements.

91 business owners responded to the survey. Their feedback is used to gather baseline data for the Growing Mid Wales Digital Programme and tailor our efforts to best serve the community.

### 2. Growing Mid Wales: Supporting Enterprise Survey

During May-July we surveyed businesses to identify the need for funding intervention in the local commercial sites and property market.

41 businesses responded. Their feedback helped us to design the criteria for the Mid Wales Commercial Property Investment Fund, to be launched in May 2025.

### 3. Supported Lodgings Policy

This is a new provision to help young people who are leaving foster care or facing homelessness to remain in Ceredigion. In June we asked existing foster carers, the foster panel and key stakeholders for feedback on the draft policy.

We received 4 responses which resulted in changes to the policy. The policy was approved by Cabinet in September 2024, and the scheme will be launched in May 2025.

### 4. Review of 20mph speed limits on Council maintained roads

Along with most Welsh authorities, we aligned our review to Welsh Government's review of 20mph limits. Between May and September 2024, we received 62 individual comments during the 'listening phase' of our review of the 20mph speed limits.

23 comments supported the new 20mph limits, 20 expressed desires for a change to the national policy, 16 objected to existing 20mph limits on county roads, 8 referred directly to Welsh Government-managed Trunk Road locations, over which the Council has no jurisdiction, and 3 were deemed out of scope. The review identified no further changes, and that 20mph limits introduced on County Roads within Ceredigion in 2023 should remain.

## **5. Living in Ceredigion: National Residents Survey**

Between August and October 2024, we asked residents for their views on the Council services they receive and how they feel about living in Ceredigion.

We received 1,961 responses. 57% were satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Just 9% were satisfied with the way the Council runs things and 17% think that the Council keeps people well informed about the services and benefits it provides. The results will be used to inform our annual self-assessment report.

## **6. Llansantffraid Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

Conservation areas are special places with unique architectural or historic value. There are 13 in Ceredigion. In September 2024, we held a drop-in event in Llanon to gather local knowledge and people's view on this conservation area. 61 people attended.

Their feedback helped to create the draft Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan for Llansantffraid which we consulted on in Spring 2025. This document will be part of a series that we aim to adopt as Supplementary Planning Guidance for planning applications affecting conservation areas.

## **7. New Quay Place Plan & New Quay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

This drop-in event was similar to the event in Llanon. We are developing Place Plans with local Town Councils, including New Quay. Feedback from the event contributed to New Quay Place Plan as well as New Quay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. 38 people attended this event in September 2024.

Their feedback helped to create the New Quay Place Plan, now available on our website [Place Plans - Ceredigion County Council](#), and the draft Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan for New Quay which was put out for consultation in Spring 2025.

## **8. Annual Meetings with Town and Community Councils**

In November 2024 our senior managers met with representatives of the Town and Community Councils in the North, Mid and South of the county. 50 representatives of Town and Community Councils attended across the three meetings.

## **9. Talybont Flood Alleviation Scheme**

In 2021, Welsh Government invited the Council to review flooding data for Talybont and to submit an outline business case for funding to prevent future flooding. Feedback was sought on potential options identified through specialist hydraulic modelling.

Between December 2024 and February 2025, 25 people responded to the survey and approximately 50 attended a drop-in event in Talybont. If the outline business case is successful, further work and further engagement and consultation will take place before we can submit a full business case to Welsh Government.

## What Is Consultation?

Consultations are typically used to gather people's thoughts on a draft plan or project that we have developed, particularly when it will result in a change in service.

All our public consultations are published on our website [Engagement and Consultations - Ceredigion County Council](#). We have improved this webpage to differentiate between Open and Closed Consultations. We now update details of the original campaign with information about the final decision so that people can see the whole story.

## Consultation campaigns 2024-25

23 consultation exercises were completed between April 2024 and March 2025.

### 1. Traffic Regulation Order: Speed Limit in Comins Coch

We must consult on proposed changes we want to make to the highways network that we maintain. There were no objections to changing the speed limit in Comins Coch and it has been implemented.

### 2. Traffic Regulation Order: Parking on Aberystwyth seafront

In April we consulted on changes to parking restrictions on part of Aberystwyth seafront and some adjoining streets. This was linked to the refurbishment of the Old College and improvements to our Active Travel network.

327 responses and an online petition were received in objection to this scheme. One expression of support was received. The TRO was approved in May 2024.

It should be noted that there was some confusion between this TRO and subsequent ones. For ease of reference, these are listed next.

### 3. Traffic Regulation Order: Off Street Parking Places

In November we commenced a public consultation on a review of car parks and charges for car parks in Ceredigion. 226 objections were received. This TRO was



approved in January 2025, with one amendment – to maintain Gloster Row/Red Lion car park, Cardigan as a Pay and Display car park. The amendment was recommended due to feedback received during the consultation.

#### **4. Traffic Regulation Order: Parking Charges on Aberystwyth Promenade**

Also in November we commenced a public consultation on proposals to introduce car park charges along sections of Aberystwyth promenade. 106 objections were received and 2 responses in favour of expressing no objection. This TRO was approved in January 2025.

It is worth noting that expressions of support are not invited as part of the statutory TRO procedure and so none are logged. In 2025-26 we will invite expressions of support as well as objections to TRO consultations.

#### **5. Traffic Regulation Order: Speed limit in Felinfach, and 6. Traffic Regulation Order: Parking restrictions in Felinfach**

Both these consultations were regarding proposed changes to ensure road safety by the access to the new school. No objections were received, and the new restrictions were approved.

#### **7. Fostering – Special Guardianship Orders**

We reviewed our policy on Special Guardianship Orders and consulted about it in the Spring. This is a specialised field and 7 people responded to the consultation. The policy was amended as a result of the feedback received. Cabinet approved the new policy in July.

#### **8. Relocation of Aberaeron Library**

In February 2024 Council approved the co-location of library provision with other Council services wherever possible as part of 2024-25 budget reduction proposals. In May-July we consulted on the relocation of Aberaeron library to Penmorfa Office, Aberaeron.

We received 896 responses, 91% of which did not support relocating the library. The relocation of Aberaeron library to Penmorfa was approved at a meeting of Cabinet in October 2024. It is worth noting that if people agree with a proposal, they tend not to respond to a consultation to show their support.



## **9. Ceredigion County Council Digital Strategy**

Between May and July, we consulted with residents and stakeholders on our new Digital Strategy. We received 29 survey responses, and the strategy was amended to reflect the feedback. The Strategy was approved at a meeting of the Council in January.

## **10. Relocation of care services from Tregerddan Care Home to Hafan y Waun**

In February 2024 Council approved a review of future options for Tregerddan Care Home as part of 2024-25 budget reduction proposals. Between April and July, we consulted on this potential transfer of residential care services. We ran an online and paper copy survey and offered drop in events to gather responses. The impact assessment was updated as a result of the feedback.

We received 125 responses to the online survey. 67% of those who responded disagreed with the transfer. The transfer was approved by Cabinet in September.

## **11. Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2024-29**

During the summer we consulted on our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. The strategy is a statutory requirement under the Welsh Language Standards. 72 responses were received, 48 questionnaires completed in English and 24 in Welsh. The Strategy was amended in response to feedback received and was approved by Cabinet in December 2024.

## **12. System of voting at Ceredigion County Council elections**

During July-September we asked residents if the Single Transferable Vote system should be adopted by Ceredigion County Council. 475 responses were received.

67% of those who responded supported the Single Transferable Vote system. To adopt the new system, 26 (two-thirds) elected members must vote in favour of adoption. At the Council meeting in November, 18 members voted for and 17 against. As such, the voting system will not change for the 2027 local government elections.

## **13. Growing Mid Wales: Proposals from mobile network operators**

In the Autumn, we published a formal consultation on Sell2Wales. It was aimed at Mobile Network Operators and mobile infrastructure builders. We wanted to gauge the

appetite for future engagement with our Mobile Coverage and Capacity Project. We received 8 responses which will help us to develop business cases and identify priority areas.

#### **14. Aberystwyth Coastal Defence Scheme**

During August-October we asked for feedback on proposals to deal with coastal flooding in Aberystwyth. People could respond through an online or paper copy survey or by attending in person events at Aberystwyth bandstand in September.

There were 138 responses to the survey and approximately 200 people attended the drop in events. Their feedback has helped us to develop an outline business case for Welsh Government funding to progress the coastal defence scheme.

#### **15. Housing: Common Allocations Policy**

In October-November we asked for people's views on our Common Allocations Policy. The policy sets out how we allocate social housing in Ceredigion and was last reviewed in 2019. The consultation was promoted widely and also sent to all 2,000 applicants on the housing register. This resulted in over 100 responses (over 80% from housing register applicants), with overwhelming support for the policy. Some changes were made as a result of feedback, and the new policy was adopted in the Cabinet meeting in February.

#### **16. Reorganisation of schools: Ysgol Llangwryfon, and**

#### **17. Reorganisation of schools: Ysgol Syr John Rhys, and**

#### **18. Reorganisation of schools: Ysgol Craig yr Wylfa, and**

#### **19. Reorganisation of schools: Llanfihangel y Creuddyn**

In October we commenced statutory consultations on proposals to close the primary schools listed above and transfer the pupils to neighbouring schools. A total of 464 responses were received, including a formal challenge to the proposed closure date of the schools. In the meeting of Cabinet in December it was agreed that closing the schools as from 31 August 2025 was not an option as the timetable was not achievable. Cabinet decided that these campaigns should be treated as informal consultations on the reorganisation and future of the schools.

In April 2025, at a special meeting of our Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed to close these consultations.

## **20. Statement of Gambling Policy**

During October-December we consulted on our revised Statement of Gambling Policy. The policy must be reviewed every three years. We received 8 responses to the consultation. Small changes were made to the policy as a result of feedback received. It was approved at a meeting of full Council in March 2025.

## **21. Hackney (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles Policy**

We reviewed our current licencing requirements in line with statutory UK Government guidance. During October-December we consulted on our revised policy for taxis and private hire vehicles. The consultation was promoted to over 300 people/ organisations, including every current licensee. We received 6 responses. The policy was amended as a result of the feedback. It was approved at a meeting of full Council in March 2025.

## **22. Traffic Regulation Order – Speed restriction: IBERS, Penrhyncoch to Waunfawr**

In December-January we invited objections to a change in speed restrictions at the above location. This was linked to improvements to our Active Travel network. One response was received. The Traffic Regulation Order was made in May 2025.

## **23. Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans**

In January-March we consulted on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Cardigan, Lampeter, Llanbadarn Fawr, Llandysul, New Quay and Tregaron. The plans are the result of previous engagement campaigns that helped inform the final product.

We received 60 responses. 50% of respondents agreed with the management proposals and 65% agreed that the character of the area had been adequately defined in the appraisal. Following the consultation, relevant amendments have been made to the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to reflect the feedback received. They will be presented to Cabinet in June 2025 with a recommendation that they are adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## Equality Monitoring

Equality Monitoring questions should be included in all our campaigns. They help us to check that we have collected the views of a broad range of people that reflect the population in Ceredigion.

The table below shows the average demographic profile of responses to consultations compared to Census 2021 data. The statistics provide a very rough estimate of trends and should be read with the following in mind:

- The equality monitoring questions are not compulsory and are often not answered. The figures below therefore don't truly reflect the demographics of the people that respond to our surveys.
- The number of responses we receive to individual surveys is hugely varied, between 6 and 1,961. For this reason, the median is included in the table.

	<b>Survey responses average:</b>	<b>Survey responses: median</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>
Age: 0-15 years	0.2%	0%	14%
Age: 16-24 years	3%	1.5%	15%
Age: 25-44 years	20%	16.5%	19%
Age: 45-64 years	42%	46%	27%
Age: 65+ years	17%	11%	26%
Male	38%	35%	49%
Female	53%	50%	51%
Transgender	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual	3%	1%	5%
Ethnicity other than White	1%	1%	4%
Christian	41%	40%	47%
Other religion	4%	2%	24%
No religion	37%	38%	43%
Previously served in the Armed Forces	3%	4%	4%
Disabled or long term illness	16%	14%	22%

This data shows us that most respondents are aged 45-64. We need to do more to gather views from young people aged 0-24 and from older people aged 65+.

We also need to do more to gather views from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and from people of Sikh, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist faith (there are overlaps between religion and ethnicity). Disabled people are also underrepresented in this rough snapshot.

Feedback from consultations provide useful information for our equality impact assessments; it's important that we make every effort to reach out to people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010).

## Welsh Language

We have a duty to consider the impact that our decisions may have on the Welsh Language and, where relevant, we must include a question asking this in our consultation campaigns.

Seven of our consultations did not ask the question because they were invitations to respond to a Traffic Regulation Order and this is not part of the statutory process.

One campaign was a request for feedback from mobile network operators, and the question was not applicable.

Of the remaining eleven campaigns, seven did not ask for feedback on impact on the Welsh language. We have changed our processes and have delivered training to avoid this happening again.

## Conclusion

This is our third annual report, and the policy will be reviewed and updated in 2025-26. This ensures that we continue to improve our practice.

There were 32 engagement and consultation campaigns during 2024-25. This is nine more than last year and eleven more than the previous year.

Quality is more important than quantity, however and it is pleasing to note that engagement and participation has improved since the policy was introduced in 2022.

The number of people that follow our corporate social media accounts has increased and we have established a method for people to watch Council meetings online as well as in person. We have introduced a dynamic method of gathering feedback from people who contact us through our new Clic feedback survey. We have developed our use of online engagement platforms while maintaining the use of non-digital methods. We have established an e-petition system, and this will be available on our website soon.

This annual monitoring process has enabled us to note areas for more improvement. For example, we can do more to improve the way we feedback to people who respond to our campaigns. We also want to explore new ways of engaging with people and have established Ceredigion People's Panel as a start.

We need to publicise our new e-petition system, and we want to encourage more people to vote in local and national elections, particularly people that are underrepresented on the electoral register.

We want to work with partners to improve our engagement with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and the LGBTQ+ community. We also need to do more to gather views from young people aged 0-24 and older people aged 65+.

These priorities will be tested with council staff, members of the public and our established stakeholder forums during the year. We will bring our revised Engagement and Participation policy back for scrutiny in Spring 2026.

**Action plan: progress 2024-25****Aim 1: To mainstream effective engagement and participation across Ceredigion County Council**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
Develop an Engagement toolkit and deliver training on its use to all Corporate Managers.	The toolkit is available to all staff on our internal website. Training has been delivered to Corporate Managers; ongoing advice and support is available.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>
Maintain a timetable of consultation and engagement exercises carried out by all Council Services.	The timetable is updated on an ongoing basis and shared with all services via the Insights Board.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>
Publish an Engagement Annual Report to monitor the developments as we change how we engage with the public.	This report fulfils the requirement for 2023-24. The report is scrutinised by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presented to Cabinet before it is published on our website.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>

**Aim 2: To ensure that we engage with the people of Ceredigion in the best way**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
To revise and update our list of Stakeholder groups	The list has been revised and is updated when needed. It is part of the Engagement toolkit and available to all staff.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>
To develop the use of online engagement platforms and maintain the use of non-digital engagement methods.	The corporate Engagement and Consultations webpage is updated regularly. An increasing number of people are using My Account to receive updates on our consultations. Paper copies continue to be available on request from our	All Corporate Managers	<b>Ongoing</b>



	Libraries and Leisure/Wellbeing Centres and posters are created to promote our campaigns.		
To improve the way that we feedback to those who have participated in our engagement exercises.	A consistent feedback method is outlined in our Engagement and Consultation toolkit. Our Engagement and Consultation webpage is now updated with feedback on the outcome of the consultation.	All Corporate Managers	Ongoing

### Aim 3: To meet our statutory duties and responsibilities under legislation

Action	Progress	Responsibility	Status
To ensure a mechanism is in place so that the public can attend Council meetings in person or remotely via a hybrid meeting system.	The draft protocol for Attendance at Local Authority multi-location Meetings and Electronic Broadcasts of Meetings was presented to Democratic Services Committee on 09/06/2023 and approved by Council on 26/10/23.	Democratic Services	Complete
To revise and update our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool	The revised Integrated Impact Assessment tool has been updated and is used regularly.	Equality and Inclusion	Complete
To establish an e-petition system and publish a protocol that sets out how the Council intends to handle and respond to petitions.	The Petitions Protocol is listed under Part 4 (O) and Part 5 (O) of our constitution. People can access the new e-petition system via our website.	Democratic Services	Ongoing

**Aim 4: To keep up to date with the latest innovations and best practice in the field of engagement**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
To review and revise Ceredigion County Council's Engagement and Participation Policy	The current Engagement and Participation Policy was published in October 2022. It will be reviewed in 2025-2026.	Equality and Inclusion officers	<b>Ongoing</b>
To keep an engagement toolkit up to date for all staff to use.	The engagement toolkit is used frequently by council staff and updated regularly.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>
To liaise with Engagement and Equalities colleagues across Wales.	The Equalities and Inclusion manager is a member of the all-Wales Social Care Wales's Resourceful Communities Partnership Group.  Ceredigion co-ordinates the regional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion officers' groups which meets quarterly.	Equality and Inclusion	<b>Complete</b>