

Community Involvement Strategy 2021 - 2027



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Introduction

This updated Community Involvement Strategy aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities who can influence and shape the county in which they live, work and visit. Listening, communicating, engaging with and involving our local communities, citizens, staff, elected members and partners is a central part of our day to day delivery of services and supports us to achieve our 8 citizen outcomes.

This strategy aims to build upon good practice and lessons learned through the County Conversation, which was launched in 2016. This started our ongoing conversation with local communities. Through the County Conversation, communities in Conwy County told us what is important to them and their ideas for change. The Covid-19 lockdowns have necessitated a shift to discussions online and whilst some struggled to begin with, in general communities have become adept in online communication. Whilst this will never replace 'face to face' communication and has the risk of digitally excluding some people, it is anticipated this model will continue to some extent as an option (amongst many) for sharing community ideas. Digital platforms have also opened up access and provided opportunities for people to get involved that usual wouldn't have. This strategy has therefore been updated to reflect the change in digital engagement.

In addition, in April 2021 the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act came into force. This places a duty of public participation on Local Authorities. This means we must encourage local people to participate in Local Government - such as a greater involvement in the democratic process. We must demonstrate that we have an ongoing process of engagement and consultation with the community, Businesses, Trade Unions and Staff and throughout the year, and that we can evidence what we have done as a result of feedback.

Furthermore in March 2021, the socio-economic duty was introduced (under part 1 of the Equalities Act 2010). This means that our decisions must deliver better outcomes for people living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. We need to understand the views and requirements of those impacted by decisions, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage. This is a fine balance as we must also manage expectation and avoid engagement overload which could lead to disengagement. This involvement strategy aims to support these duties.

Citizen Outcomes

Our 8 Citizen outcomes reflect the long term aspirations both the Council and our communities wish to achieve. **People in Conwy:**



OUTCOME 1: Are educated and skilled



OUTCOME 2: Are safe and feel safe



OUTCOME 3: Have access to affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives



OUTCOME 4: Are healthy and active



OUTCOME 5: Live in a county which has a prosperous economy



OUTCOME 6: Value and look after the environment



OUTCOME 7: Live in a county where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive



OUTCOME 8: Contribute to their community. They are informed, included and listened to

Achieving these 8 outcomes is at the forefront of everything we do as a Council. We have used this to form the basis of our Strategic Well-being Objectives which are set out in the [Corporate Plan 2017 to 2022](#).

However, we cannot achieve this in isolation. We are committed to ensuring that engagement is a two-way process, including listening to the voice of our citizens, communities, staff, elected members and partners when shaping decisions, services and policies that affect them. We want to place citizens at the heart of our decision-making and ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to get involved at a level and in a way that suits them.

We hope you will all want to play a part in working together to continue to improve the way we work with communities and help citizens and communities to have a bigger say in the services they receive and the places where they live.

We look forward to working alongside the people and communities of Conwy to make sure that we achieve the aims of this strategy together.

Iwan Davies
Chief Executive



Councillor Charlie McCoubrey
Leader of the Council



Our involvement objectives and principles

The involvement objectives below identify how we will ensure the Community Involvement Strategy delivers an effective and coordinated approach to community involvement for the benefit of all citizens and local communities – in order to support strong, active and inclusive communities.

Our objectives are to:

1. **strengthen, develop** and **maintain opportunities** for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities as part of an on-going conversation
2. support opportunities for communities to **shape** and **influence** the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities
3. better **coordinate** community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation to avoid duplication
4. encourage involvement **from all sections** of the **community**, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities
5. improve **feedback** to participants about the outcomes of consultation and community engagement
6. promote **variety, flexibility** and **choice** in community engagement activities
7. develop a forward work plan so citizens and local communities can **choose** how and when they want to get involved
8. **listen** and **learn** from our own and others' experience and share community involvement skills and knowledge of putting the citizen at the heart of decision-making

To achieve our involvement objectives we will strive to make it as easy as possible for the people of Conwy to make their voices heard.

Our principles are to be:

1. **Accessible and inclusive** - all people within our community have the choice and opportunity to get involved.
2. **Clear and professional** - establishing trust, reliability and credibility.
3. **Targeted** - the right people get the right information to be involved.
4. **Open, honest and transparent** - having a clear purpose and that we are honest about any limitations
5. **Timely and relevant** - giving people enough time and notice to get involved.
6. **Sustainable** - to ensure on-going mutually beneficial relationships.
7. **Two-way** - we will have a conversation, listening, not just talking.

We have also signed up to the [National Principles for Public Engagement](#) in Wales and are committed to the [National Participation Standards for Children and Young People](#) developed by Children in Wales.

What is Community Involvement?

Community involvement can mean different things to different people, and can cover a range of approaches depending on what people want it to achieve. The below outlines the different types of methods we might use to involve and ensure the voices of our people and communities are heard.



Also it's important to recognise that there are different types of communities and these communities can be defined by the different purposes that bring people together (further information in [appendix 1](#)) –

1. **Interest** - Communities of people who share the same interest or passion.
2. **Action** - Communities of people trying to bring about change.
3. **Place** - Communities of people brought together by geographic boundaries.
4. **Practice** - Communities of people in the same profession or undertake the same activities.
5. **Circumstance** - Communities of people brought together by external events/situations.

Why is getting involved important?

We want to work closely with citizens and local communities to encourage effective community involvement. It is important for people to get involved and share their lived experiences in order to shape and improve their individual circumstances, and to help deliver and improve services in their community.

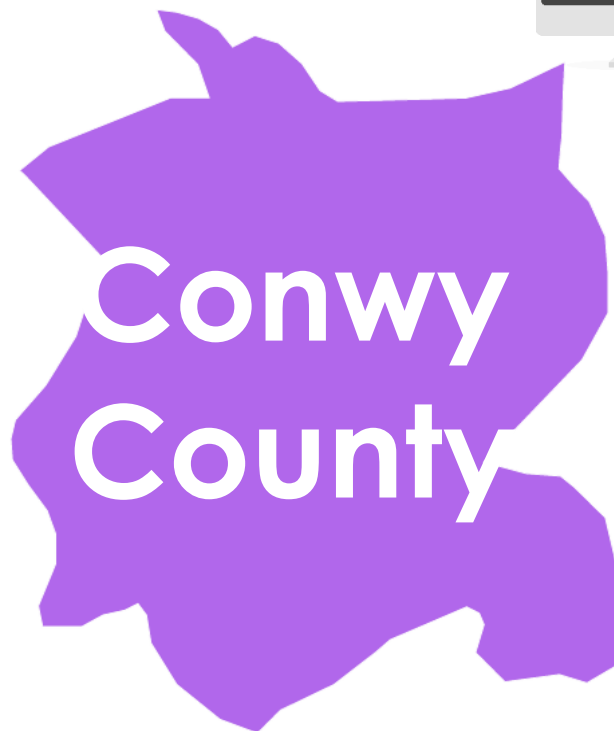
Engagement is becoming increasingly important. The current economic and environmental climate means that we will need to make changes as to how and what we deliver over the next few years. The impact of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic has many negative effects, but there have been positives, including a much great community spirit and resilience to volunteer to help each other during difficult times. So it is more vital than ever that we work together with our citizens and local communities to help us identify local priorities and develop solutions to the challenges we face.



19% of people feel they can influence council decisions – we want to improve this¹



people in the region are digitally excluded²

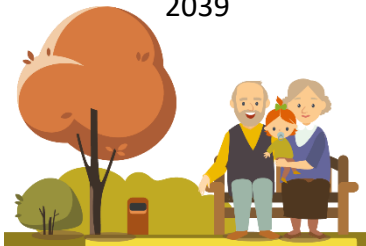


We have delivered **£56.887** million of savings since 2013...



...but approximately **£28.22** million savings need to be made by 2023⁴

↑ 35% rise in the number of people aged 65 + by 2039



↓ 2% decline in the number of people aged under 25 by 2039³



1,850 15 – 29 year olds move out of the area each year & only **1,550** move in. Over time this gap is expected to increase & will impact on the age structure of our communities⁵

1 National Survey for Wales 2018/19, Welsh Government

2 Internet users, 2020 Office for National Statistics

3 Population projections (2014-based principal projection), Welsh Government

4 [Conwy County Borough Council's 19/20 Annual Report Summary](#)

5 Registrar General's mid-year population estimates, 2015



Who we will involve?

We will involve a wide range of stakeholders, including -



How can people get involved?

There are many ways in which people can get involved, such as –

County Conversation

This is one of the ways that you can share ideas to improve services and your local area

Conwy Council Website

Our website provides the latest information on what's going on in the Council and how you can get involved

Community groups

There are lots of community groups running in Conwy, where people with an interest can get involved. For groups in your area visit [Dewis & Conwy Community Well-being Team](#)

Daily Contact

With Councillors & staff - for example social workers, youth workers, refuse collectors, teachers, box office assistants, etc

Involvement Network

Provides an opportunity for adults to get involved and have their say about health & social care services in Conwy

Committee Meetings

All our committee meetings (including scrutiny & planning) are open to the public (apart from exempt items)

Youth Council & App

Provides an opportunity for children and young people in the area to have their voice heard and have a choice in decisions that affect them

Formal Consultation

We have a dedicated '[Have your Say](#)' webpage for when we need to get your views on specific issues, or changes to services & plans

Social media

We're always looking to use the latest ways to inform people about opportunities to get involved – find us on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)

Customer Feedback

Tell us when we are doing really well or what you would like to see improve

Public Services Board

We work closely in partnership with other public services to improve social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being

Citizen Engagement Group

People can join the group, which is run by Community & Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) to have their say on a range of topics

Town & Community Councils

These local councils serve their communities and act to improve the quality of life in their locality. Get involved & find out more about your local council

Voluntary & Third Sector Organisations

These are a good way people can get involved in their local community and provide feedback in a less formal route

Equality & accessibility considerations

Our engagement needs to reflect the diversity and various lived experiences of our community. We will seek out voices from all backgrounds and we will take steps to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to have their say and are listened to. We will be sensitive to different cultures, languages, ethnicities, religions, preferred gender pronouns, sexual orientation, ages, socio-economic status, backgrounds (such as those experiencing poverty), communication methods and accessibility needs.

As part of this we will consider the requirements of people with additional requirements, and aim to reduce the barriers for those with sensory impairments (both hearing and visual) and learning impairments to get involved. Where appropriate we will consider the use of large print, easy read, audio, videos and braille.

To help with any digital engagement we might undertake, there are useful support guides and tips at AbilityNet, which provides guidance about how to:

- [change the size of text on the screen](#)
- [magnify the screen](#)
- [change your colours](#)
- [make your mouse easier to use](#)
- [use your keyboard to move around the site](#)
- [talk to your device](#)
- [make your device talk to you](#)

Our library staff are also able to facilitate and help support people to access technology. More information on our libraries can be found on the Conwy website – www.conwy.gov.uk/libraries.

Any feedback published following community involvement will be provided in the appropriate format as identified during the activity.

Data Protection

We adhere to [data protection laws](#). We will explain why we want personal information, what we will use it for, and how long we will keep it. You can find out more by visiting our [full privacy notice](#) on our website.

How we will feedback on the difference made?

After each involvement process, we will provide a summary of the feedback to citizens who got involved, to let them know what we did.

A staff guide has also been produced providing guidance for our employees on how to involve and engage with our communities.

How to contact us

You can join [The County Conversation](#) to share your views and ideas about the County or your local area.



www.conwy.gov.uk/The-County-Conversation

www.facebook.com/sgwrsconwyconvo/

[@sgwrsconwyconvo](#)



Conwy County Borough Council
PO Box 1
Conwy
LL30 9GN



countyconversation@conwy.gov.uk



01492 574000

BT Relay Service Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling **18001** before the number they require.



British Sign Language users can contact Conwy County Borough Council using a Sign Language interpreter, through the InterpretersLive! service, provided by Sign Solutions – visit www.conwy.gov.uk/Contact-Us/sign



We are happy to provide this document in large print, audio and braille.

Please contact the Corporate Improvement and Development Team

This document is also available in Welsh.



Appendix 1 – Community Types

Type	Definition	Example
Community of Action	A community with a goal to use collective power to make change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities trying to go plastic free • Communities taking over a community asset • Communities twinning with foreign towns or villages
Community of Practice	A community for people participating in the same activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport Clubs (e.g. football and rugby) • Parkrun • Fitness Classes
Community of Place	A community for people united by geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and Communities Councils • Community Clear up days • Friends of Parks
Community of Interest	A community for people whom share the same common interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's Shed • Allotments • Choir • Amateur dramatics • Flower Club
Community of Circumstance	A community for people united by a common situation or challenge not of their making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory Impairment Forum • LGBT Community • Disability Access Group