

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill survey analysis

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Papur 1 Dadansoddiad o'r arolwg

Paper 1 Survey analysis

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee is scrutinising the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. As part of its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill, the Committee conducted a survey which focused on Part 3 of the Bill - Promoting access to local government.

Survey promotion and analysis

The aim of the survey was to hear from as diverse a range of Welsh citizens as possible. The survey was promoted extensively through a variety of channels:-

- Through the networks of key stakeholders;
- On the National Assembly for Wales' website and social media platforms. This included focused advertisements which allowed us to target audiences in areas where we tend to get a lower response rate;
- People visiting the Senedd and Pierhead building were encouraged to complete the survey;
- People taking part in Assembly Education and Youth Engagement visits and outreach sessions. This ensured that a number of those who responded to the survey were not self-selecting.



To compile this summary, an in-depth analysis of a complete data set was conducted; all data can be sourced to individual responses and further analysis can be undertaken upon request. Each question in the survey is addressed in turn.

Results are calculated from the number of respondents who answered the specific question and not the overall number of respondents to the survey. There were **511 responses** in total.

1. Did you vote in the last local government elections in Wales in May 2017?

82.5% of respondents to this question voted in the last local government elections, whilst **16.3%** did not. **1.2%** did not know.

2. When thinking about how local government operates, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I understand how my council makes and scrutinises decisions"

42.7% of respondents to this question agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, whilst **34.8%** disagreed or strongly disagreed. **22.6%** neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

3. When thinking about your ability to influence the decisions made by your council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I feel able to influence decisions made by my council"

70.1% of respondents to this question disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, whilst **14.2%** agreed or strongly agreed. **15.8%** neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

4. Have you ever shared your views with the council/ contributed to a council consultation?

60.4% of respondents to this question had shared their views with the council and/or contributed to a council consultation, whilst **36.8%** had never done so. **2.8%** did not know whether they had shared their views with the council or contributed to a council consultation.

5. What was the subject on which you shared your views with the council/ the subject matter of the

consultation(s) to which you contributed? (Respondents were able to select more than one answer)

Waste management (**43.5%**) and highways and transport (**42.8%**) were the subjects selected the most in response to this question. This was followed by education (**33.6%**), leisure and cultural services (**31.9%**), housing (**23.3%**) and social services (**23%**). For the **28.1%** of respondents who selected '*Other (please specify)*', the following were some of the more common answers given (please note that the following is a sample of all responses received. All responses are available on request.):-

- *Planning.*
- *Budget.*
- *Environment and climate change.*

6. How did you share your views with your council/ contribute to the council consultation(s)? (Respondents were able to select more than one answer).

The most popular options selected were '*Online - for example, through e-mail or an online discussion board*' (**47.6%**), '*Survey or questionnaire*' (**41.4%**) and '*Meeting - for example, a public meeting or meeting with a councillor*' (**40.4%**).

30.8% of respondents to this question selected '*In writing - for example, a letter*', whilst **16.1%** selected '*Petition*', **15.8%** selected '*Telephone*' and **9.9%** selected '*Focus group or roundtable*'.

0.3% selected '*Don't know*' with **6.5%** selecting '*Other (please specify)*'. For those who selected the latter, the following answers were given:-

- *Apps (Fixmystreet app, local authority app).*
- *Through the local press.*
- *Via the Council's public consultation process.*

7. What would encourage you to share your views with your council/ contribute to a council consultation? (Respondents were able to select more than one answer).

'*Guidance on how I can share my views*' (**60.9%**) and '*More information on how my council makes decisions*' (**57.7%**) were the most common answers selected in response to this question.

52.4% of respondents to this question selected 'Assurance/ evidence that my views will be taken into account', with 45.5% selecting 'Ability to choose how I share my views (for example, in writing, focus group, petition, etc.) and 43.9% choosing 'If I felt particularly strongly about the subject matter'. 39.7% of survey respondents selected 'Greater access to council meetings to understand how decisions are made.'

3.2% of respondents chose 'Nothing - I'm not interested in sharing my views' with 2.7% selecting 'Don't know'. For the 2.7% of survey respondents who chose 'Other (please specify)'

"More marketing when it's possible to contribute to decision-making. Better explanation on how to contact my local member."

"Your Wales is a great way to give feedback."

8. In your view, what are the barriers to engaging with your council? (Respondents were able to select more than one answer).

'I don't think my views will make any difference' (56.6%) and 'Lack of information on how the council operates and makes decisions' (53.1%) were the most common answers selected in response to this question.

31% of respondents selected 'I'm unsure how I can share my views with the council', with 15.9% selecting 'I'm not able to view council meetings',

2.6% of respondents chose 'Don't know' whilst 8.4% did not believe there were any barriers to engaging with their council. For those who selected 'Other (please specify)' (13.8%), the following were some of the more common answers given. All responses are available upon request:-

Communication

"The council will listen carefully then do whatever it likes."

"Council members don't listen"

"Just feel they don't listen, they ignore emails or reply about something completely different."

Digital literacy

"As a former Council employee I have knowledge of how the local authority functions and the technology to be able to go looking for consultations/surveys. Others may not be part of the same networks. While everything is advertised online, if not digitally

literate or proactive then you wouldn't see these opportunities to get involved."

Engagement

"Lack of evening and weekend engagement - so constantly not geared to those who are working, or only one event is held on one evening - very limiting, to reflect the number of people who are working - more events/engagement/consultation needs to be held out of the working week"

"I don't think they make it easy to engage - technical documents, vague proposals, lack of action from councillors to really engage etc."

9. What would be your preferred method of sharing your views with the council?

'Online - for example, through e-mail or an online discussion board' (43.3%) was the most common answer selected in response to this question.

20.8% of respondents to this question selected *'Survey or questionnaire'*, with *'Meeting - for example, a public meeting or meeting with a councillor'* (**10.7%**) and *'Focus group or roundtable'* (**10.5%**) being the next most common answers.

The answers selected least often were *'In writing - for example, a letter'* (**5.1%**), *'Petition'* (**2.1%**) and *'Telephone'* (**1.9%**). **1.3%** of respondents selected *'Don't know'*.

For the **4.3%** of respondents who selected *'Other (please specify)'*, the following are a snapshot of the answers given.

"Submission of views at Hwbs, community centres, churches, mosques, youth clubs, schools. This would need a good communication system regularly updated with feedback."

"Facebook page so it's open for all to see and comment on or add to"

"There needs to be a complete review of planning regulations and procedures. Presently they seem designed to actively prevent any normal citizen and even councillors from having any influence over far reaching local decisions."

Demographic of survey respondents

Location

49.1% of respondents identified as being from South Wales, with **19.6%** coming from Mid and West Wales and **31.1%** from North Wales.

Age

12.2% of respondents were aged 25 and under, **59.3%** were aged between 26 – 64, with **27.7%** aged 65 and over. **0.9%** of respondents selected '*Prefer not to answer*'.

Gender

53.4% of respondents identified as female with **42.7%** of survey respondents identifying as male. **3.5%** of survey respondents chose not to answer this question, with **0.4%** choosing to select their own term.

Transgender

0.9% of respondents considered themselves transgender with **4%** preferring not to answer. The remaining **95.1%** did not consider themselves to be transgender.

Sexuality

74.2% of respondents considered themselves to be heterosexual.

4.4% of respondents selected '*Bisexual*' with **3%** selecting '*Gay/lesbian (or "Homosexual")*'.

14.8% preferred not to answer, with **3.7%** of respondents choosing their own term.

Ethnicity

90.8% of respondents described themselves as '*White*'.

1.3% identified as '*Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups*', with a further **0.4%** describing themselves as '*Asian*' and **0.2%** describing themselves as '*Black / African / Caribbean*'. **0.9%** selected '*Other ethnic origin*' with **6.4%** choosing not to answer this question.

Disability

66.4% of those who responded to this question did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability. **8.1%** of respondents chose not to answer this question.

Of the **25.6%** of respondents with disabilities, **50.4%** selected '*Physical*' and **44.4%** selected '*Mental health*'. **35.9%** of survey respondents had a medical condition (e.g. Cancer, MS). **9.4%** of survey respondents selected '*Sensory disabilities*' with **0.9%** selecting '*Learning disabilities*'. **2.6%** of respondents preferred not to say.