

Citizen participation in Strategic Planning

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Wolverhampton City Council

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The City of Wolverhampton



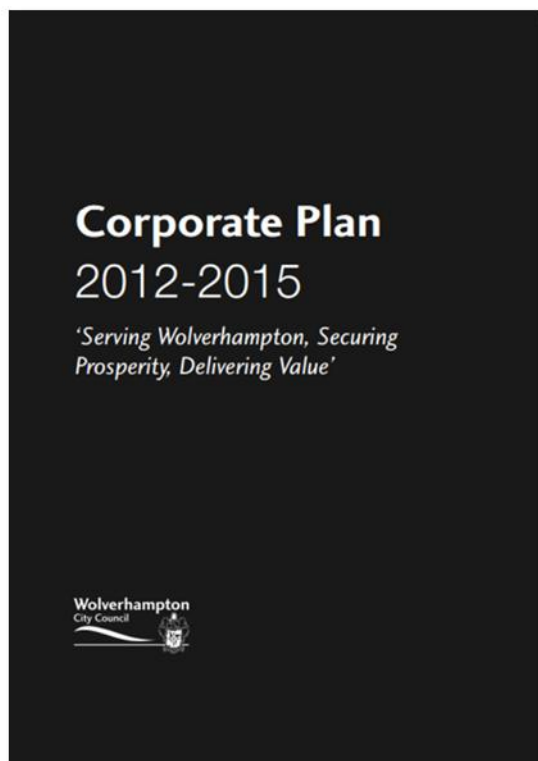
Wolverhampton is a city of 250,000 people covering an area of 69.5 square kilometres located in the centre of the UK



It is the smallest of four linked areas that make up the region known as the Black Country which has a combined population of over 1.1 million.

The proximity and interdependency of these areas is at the heart of Wolverhampton's strategic framework.

Wolverhampton's Strategic Framework



1 - Black Country Core Strategy
Regional spatial planning document for the whole Black Country partnership of councils, voluntary and public sector bodies and businesses

2 – Wolverhampton City Strategy
Strategic plan for the City of Wolverhampton partnership of public sector bodies , voluntary organisations and businesses

3 – City Council Corporate Plan
Strategic planning document of Wolverhampton City Council

Citizen Participation

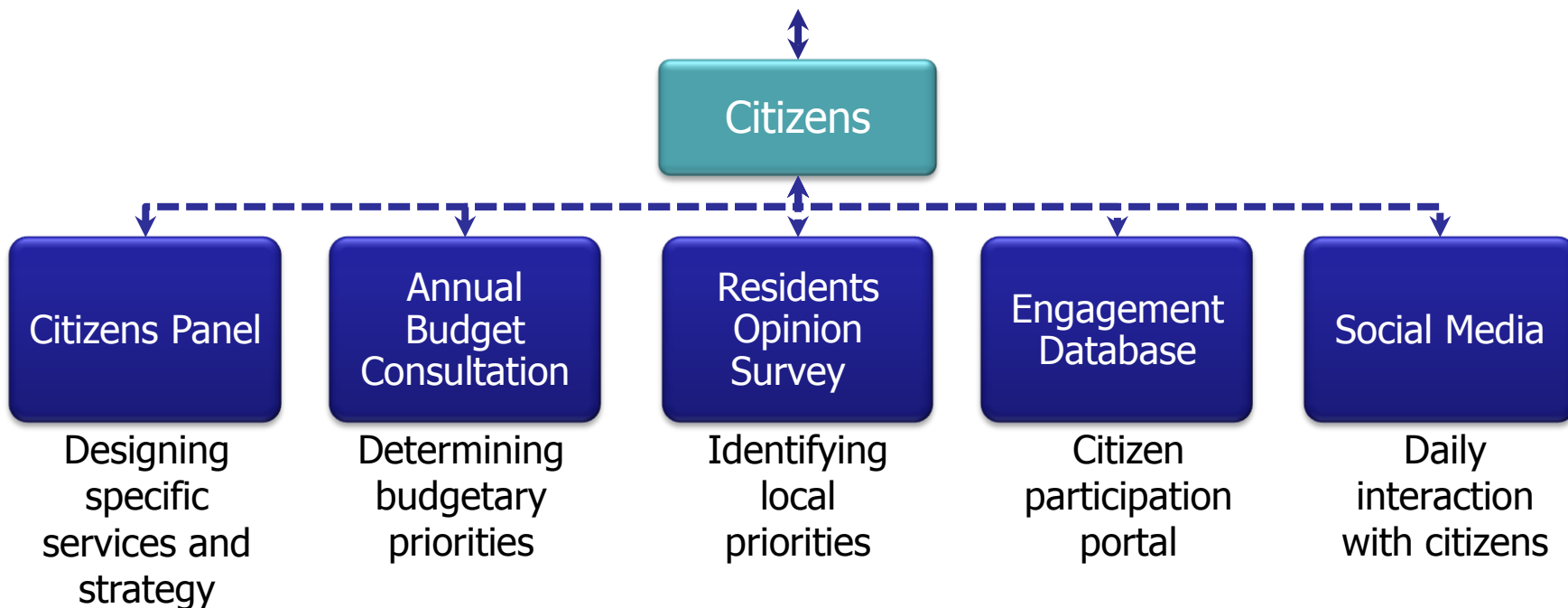
Citizen participation underpinned the development of Wolverhampton's strategic framework, helping to create the needs analysis for the City strategy that identified the strategic priorities.

Continued participation is key to ensuring that the strategy and supporting plans remain relevant to the needs of the City.

This is particularly important in the face of a predicted funding gap of £123 million by 2018/19, and the diverse and changing needs of the people who live in the City, where:

- 64.5% of are White and 35.5% of people are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- 16% were born outside of the UK.
- English is not the main language for 11%.
- 1 in 5 of the working age population are claiming benefits.
- 16% are aged over 65.

How we engage with our citizens



Citizens Panel

Involving citizens in the design of specific services and strategies

- Membership open to all residents of Wolverhampton. Members can opt in or out at any stage.
- Current membership is 1,500 and is broadly representative of the City's population in gender, geography and ethnicity.
- Membership refreshed annually to ensure levels of active participation remain high.
- Annual work programme on focusing on specific themes in the City.
- Engagement with the panel carried out using surveys and focus groups.

Annual Budget Consultation

Involving citizens in determining budgetary priorities

- Annual survey carried out to determine budgetary priorities.
- As financial pressures have increased, the process has evolved. Whereas previously it was about establishing spending priorities, it has evolved into one of deciding how services can be reduced, redesigned or even ceased with the least impact on residents.



Resident's Opinion Survey

Identifying local priorities

- Biennial survey designed by the Council and its partner organisations.
- Carried out across multiple channels – postal, online and face to face.
- Questions phrased to determine priority areas e.g. Jobs, Education, Health, Crime and personal finance.

Wolverhampton Residents' Opinion Survey 2013

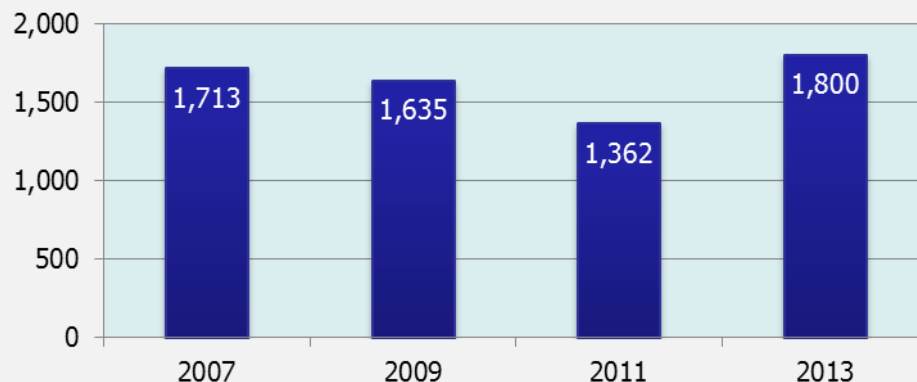
Section 1 - Place

Q1 A - Thinking about your neighbourhood, which of the things below, if any, most concern you? (By your neighbourhood we mean 15-20 minutes walk from your home.)

B - And thinking about Wolverhampton as a whole, which of the things below, if any, most concern you? (Please tick up to 5 options per question)

	A - Neighbourhood	B - Wolverhampton
Access to health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to libraries, museums, arts and craft centres, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to sports and leisure facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities which the community can get involved in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities for teenagers / young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable decent housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job opportunities / job opportunities which match my skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities to attend events (e.g. shows and festivals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall quality of where I live (local environment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People getting on well together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People supporting each other (community spirit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

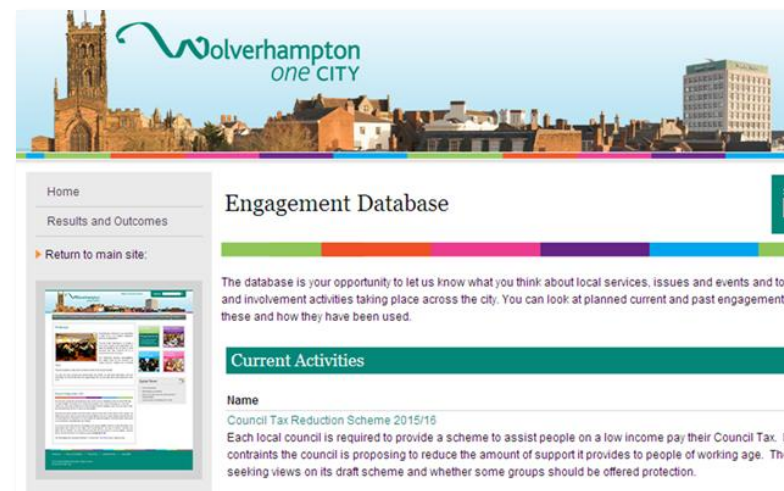
Responses to resident opinion survey



Engagement Database

Citizen participation portal

- A portal for citizens to participate in all public and voluntary sector consultations in the City.
- Facilitates citizen participation on ad-hoc projects outside of the annual/biennial engagement programmes.
- Contains details of lead organisations, supporting documents, and how to contribute.
- Database includes details of future, current and past consultations and enables citizens to view the results of these and how they have been used.



Social Media

Daily interaction with citizens

- Our most active arena for citizen participation.
- Both accounts are monitored continually allowing informal discussion with citizens about council strategies and policy in real time.
- Provides an early indication of how strategies are likely to be received and the impact they will have



Successes

- We have an effective mechanism for formal and informal citizen participation which is well established within the City and used by the Council and partner organisations.
- Encouraging citizen participation via these mechanisms provides us with a valuable insight into the opinions of residents on matters of strategy.
- It provides a rich source of data and intelligence that enables us to pinpoint priorities down to local level and deliver targeted services.
- Regular surveying enables us to monitor trends in attitude over a period time and also introduce questions around specific themes such as the impact of the economic recession.

Future challenges

- General political apathy at a national level is magnified locally (2010 General Election 61%, 2014 Local Election 33% turnout).
- How to encourage greater participation from all sections of the community and engage the silent majority. Despite our best efforts we are still only actively engaging with a small proportion e.g. 2013 Resident Opinion Survey, less than 1% of adult population.
- Finding new ways of maintaining an effective mechanism for citizen participation in the face of reducing financial resources.

Finding the solutions to these challenges will be central to ensuring effecting citizen participation in the future

Thank You

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POZnań*

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