

City of Culture engagement: feedback report April 2022

1. Why did we undertake this engagement

The City of Culture working group wanted to obtain feedback from those who live and work in Wrexham County Borough to inform the application for City of Culture 2025. The group wanted to engage with as many people as possible and to reach out to all those who are part of our community.

2. How did we do it?

A survey was developed in December 2021 by Wrexham County Borough's Performance, Improvement and Partnerships Team lead for consultation and engagement, in conjunction with the North-East Wales Regional Community Cohesion Service and the Co-production Network for Wales.

Wrexham County Borough Council's 'Your Voice Wrexham' engagement <http://www.yourvoicewrexham.net> portal facilitates consultation and engagement activities undertaken by the council.

- A bilingual survey was deployed online via 'Your Voice Wrexham' on 6th January 2022 and remained open until 31st March 2022.
- In order to support those who were unable to engage digitally or needed the survey in a different language; PDF copies of the survey were made available in Welsh, English, Polish and Portuguese. Other languages being available on request.
- Laminated sheets headed up with the survey questions were produced for taking out to events, so that people could be communicated with in person and asked to respond by providing their feedback on sticky notes.

Additionally, online forums '#Wreccsam2025' were held, on January 18th and 19th 2022.

3. What did the engagement include:

The online survey included three key free-text questions, so that participants were able to express in their own words how they saw their culture and what was of importance to them. These questions were also used to prompt discussion at the #Wreccsam2025 online forums.

The three questions asked are shown below:

1. What's your favourite thing to do in Wrexham County Borough and why?
2. What makes you proud to call Wrexham County Borough your home? Why?
3. How would you like to see Wrexham's City of Culture bid used, in creating new opportunities and addressing the needs of our local communities?

Respondents to the online survey were asked to identify whether they are responding as an individual or as a group. If the response was on behalf of a group some basic information about the group was requested.

In order for information to be received about the reach of the survey, including whether the views of people with protected characteristics had been captured, optional standard equality monitoring questions were also included in the online survey.

4. How was the engagement promoted?

Online survey

A wide range of methods were used to promote the online survey, including:

- **Social media campaign** utilising the English language/Welsh language Wrexham County Borough Council facebook and twitter accounts, and Wreccsam 2025 facebook page. Posts were 'pinned' to the top of the profile (meaning that they stayed at the top of the page regardless of when new posts were put on the page)
- **Promotion on the City of Culture website:** www.wrexham2025.com
- **Details shared on factsheet** sent to all Wrexham County Borough Councillors, who were also provided with a social media toolkit including suggested posts they could use which included links to the survey, for example:
 - 21st January 2022
 - Have your say on what YOU want to see as part of #Wreccsam2025
 - <http://www.yourvoicewrexham.net/survey/1454>
- **Information included in blog** <https://news.wrexham.gov.uk/what-will-our-story-be-wreccsam2025/>
- **promotion in Wrexham County Borough Council Staff Bulletin** with message from Chief Exec
- **Direct emails sent to:**
 - ❖ City of Culture Ambassadors and Stakeholders, and groups requesting grants from City of Culture events fund.
 - ❖ Wrexham County Borough Town and Community Councils
 - ❖ Groups of people representing those with protected characteristics within Wrexham County Borough (approximately 115 contacts)
- **1,000 bilingual printed flyers publicising the survey** produced and circulated to key locations in Wrexham County Borough including libraries and housing estate offices across the County Borough and key locations in the town centre, including:
 - ❖ Tŷ Pawb (market and community arts), for circulation at events etc
 - ❖ Yellow and Blue Hub (supporting vulnerable members of the Wrexham Community)
 - ❖ St Giles Church
 - ❖ Xplore! Science Discovery Centre
 - ❖ Saith Seren (Welsh cultural centre)
 - ❖ Wrexham Enterprise Hub (Business Wales hub)

Reminders about the engagement were sent to the press and published via social media halfway through the engagement period, with a final reminder one week before the closing date.

Review of engagement reach: Throughout the 12 week engagement period, the City of Culture working group met regularly to review the reach of the engagement.

#Wrecsam2025 forums

The #Wrecsam2025 forums were promoted via the Wrecsam2025 facebook page and across the North-East Wales Community Cohesion Team's network of contacts.

5. What was the response?

Online survey

A total of 520 people accessed the survey, and of these 257 responded to one or more of the three key questions contained within the survey.

Of the 257 who responded to one or more of the three key questions contained within the survey, 12 responses were from representatives of a group/organisation or business, and 245 responses from individuals.

#Wrecsam2025 forums

Approximately 40 people were in attendance across both sessions. Community representatives included local service providers, business owners, social organiser, faith representatives and refugees.

6. What did we find out and how?

Online survey: Analysis of free text responses

Free text responses to the online survey were analysed to identify recurring themes and the feedback grouped by theme with individual responses assigned to more than one theme if required.

Analysis was undertaken by staff working in pairs, to review the responses to each free text question. The findings have been checked to ensure consistency of approach.

The top five themes recurring in responses to each of the three questions are shown below.

Q1. What's your favourite thing to do in Wrexham County Borough and why?

251 groups or individuals responded to this question. Below are the top five themes recurring in responses to this question:

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Enjoying the countryside and country parks	Enjoying the views and exploring the rich landscape in our country parks and surrounding countryside, including the canal network; by visiting these areas, walking and/or cycling in them, enjoying the play areas.	159

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Visiting heritage sites and museums	visiting heritage sites such as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, industrial/historical heritage sites, National Trust buildings and gardens, Wrexham Museum etc	63
Socialising	Meeting up and spending time with friends, family and colleagues	29
Attending events	Attending cultural events such as live music, events celebrating local talent, events for families and children.	27
Eating out	Visiting restaurants and eateries - selecting from the wide variety of eating places on offer, enjoying good food	26

Wrexham's countryside and country parks are very much appreciated by those living and working in the County Borough, as is reflected by the number of people who fed back positively on this theme.

Here's some examples of what survey participants had to say:

*Beautiful environment and on the doorstep – nothing is far away in Wrexham.
Town centre, country parks, hills, canals and rivers all a few miles drive.*

The county is spoiled for choice in terms of scenic walks, so many of which are rich in cultural history and heritage.

We love getting out into the outdoors. Wrexham has so much to offer from hiking on Minera Mountain to splashing in the river in Erddig Country Park.

Q2. What makes you proud to call Wrexham County Borough your home? Why?

247 groups or individuals responded to this question. Below are the top five themes recurring in responses to this question:

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Friendly/welcome to diverse cultures	The people of Wrexham are welcoming and friendly, embracing people of many different cultures and faiths	54
Strong community spirit	Our strong sense of community. Wrexham people are keen to help and support one another	53
Stunning scenery and views	Opportunities to enjoy our beautiful natural landscape and environment	52
Welsh history and culture	A people proud of their Welsh heritage, language, culture and roots.	38

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Active community	An active community with lots to see and do	32

Responses to this question showed a widespread recognition of Wrexham County Borough's welcome to diverse cultures, the friendliness of people living and working in the Borough and strong community spirit.

Here's some feedback from survey participants:

I think the people of Wrexham have different qualities. We have a lot of perseverance, and we are optimistic about our future.

It is a diverse and vibrant community where people of all nationalities and backgrounds are welcomed. All their contributions are eagerly embraced, whether it is their language, cuisine, sport, art or traditions. Wrexham is inclusive and welcoming. I love the people, who are diverse and friendly. Wrexham is home and we welcome other people to make it their home.

The people of Wrexham - I've lived in other areas of the country and I've never felt as accepted or at home anywhere else. The people here truly make the town unique and what it is. You can walk through anywhere in Wrexham and you know you'll see a friendly face willing to help if you need it. I am proud to be from Wrexham and I'm proud of our Welsh culture, our rich history.

Q3. How would you like to see Wrexham's City of Culture bid used, in creating new opportunities and addressing the needs of our local communities?

247 groups or individuals responded to this question. Below are the top five themes recurring in responses to this question:

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Investment to Improve look and feel of town centre	Rejuvenate, clean and tidy up the town centre. Encourage independent businesses, pavement cafes etc. Possibly reduce rates for businesses in town centre. Address empty buildings and improve the aesthetic look and feel of the town centre. Redevelopment of Eagles Meadow shopping centre.	79
Diverse range of activities and support across the County Borough to meet different needs. Improvements for all communities in Wrexham County Borough	Activities and support for people of all ages. encouragement of community inclusion and accessibility. More opportunities and support for deprived and vulnerable people. Improvements for all communities in Wrexham County Borough, meeting the needs of our local communities	72

Theme	Description	Count of times theme included in feedback
Promote history and culture of Wrexham, including industrial history, sites of special scientific interest, archaeologically significant sites	Promote history and culture of Wrexham. Maintain and improve old and historic buildings, redevelop existing historical sites. Increased promotion of Wrexham as a place to visit, boosting the tourism industry. Promote as a business and commercial/industrial centre.	50
More community and cultural events	More good quality community and cultural events across the County Borough, to bring people of all ages together and attract people into our communities	36
Improve services/facilities for children and young people	Improve services/facilities for children and young people	34

Investment to improve the look at feel of the town centre was a key theme included in feedback to this question; there was also a recognition that the City of Culture bid needs to benefit all communities within Wrexham County Borough and not just the town centre.

The varying needs of individuals and groups within the County were recognised, and there was a strong desire to promote Wrexham’s distinct history and culture.

Here’s some examples of feedback from survey participants:

.....By promoting the town in it's very best light. To introduce thousands of people , business people artistic people creative people enterprising people, to a town that is welcoming has the ambition to grow has the space to grow, but still retain it's friendliness openness Come on in.

I would like to see the City of Culture bid used as a way to attract people to the town and to bring extra funding to develop some of the poorer areas at the County which, if done right, could transform Wrexham County into the hub of North Wales

I would like it to bring people back to the town and revitalise the community aspect. I would also like people to see the culture of the town though small put proud and passionate

#Wrecsam2025 transcription

Transcripts produced from the #Wrecsam2025 online forums sourced 27 different quotes from the local community in response to the three key questions used to prompt discussion at the forums.

A small selection of quotes from the #Wrecsam2025 forums are included below:

I came to live in Wrexham 30 years ago. I didn't know what to expect, taking a job here as a librarian. I was blown away by how friendly the people are, and still are. I live in Hightown, and what I really enjoy is being able to walk 5 minutes in one direction, and there's a massive medieval church and a beautiful town centre. 5-10 minutes in the other direction, and I'm at Erddig – and I can walk from Kingsmill all the way up to Minera Lead Mines, and all I can see is

hills and sheep. I don't even need to get in a car to do either of those things – how fantastic is that?

I truly believe Wrexham is one of the last punk places left in the UK. We do it for ourselves in this community, we do it because we need it, because we love doing it. One of the things I'm most proud of in Wrexham is I can walk into a coffee shop, or the Enterprise Hub, or Tŷ Pawb, and say 'I've got this crazy idea, but I think it's going to work.' And nine times out of ten, someone will say 'OK, let's do it! Whatever you want, whatever you need.'

Wrexham isn't well known enough in Wales, I think. It's an amazing county. The landscape, the history, the industrial history...I think it's one of the most dynamic places in the country, but people don't realise what Wrexham has to offer. It would be great if we could change that by being a City of Culture.

7. Equality monitoring

Online survey: Summary of findings

The equality monitoring data collected from the online survey has been analysed in order to understand the extent to which we have reached a cross-section of all those living and working in Wrexham, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

When compared to the known demographics of Wrexham County Borough, equality monitoring data from this survey suggests that our engagement hasn't reached a range of people fully representative of the population. There had been plans to reach out in person at events to obtain feedback, using the laminated sheets mentioned in section 2 of this report, to capture feedback. However some events have not proved appropriate for this kind of engagement and staff capacity has also impacted on ability to reach out in this way.

Covid-19 restrictions also impacted on our ability to meet up and engage with people face to face, especially during the initial period of the engagement.

Groups responding to the engagement

The 12 groups who responded to one or more of the three key survey questions represented the arts, social care services, groups for children and young people, third sector groups supporting adults, and staff from Wrexham County Borough Council.

Individuals responding to the engagement

In total, 214 individuals (87.3%) of those responding to one or more of the three questions above, chose to respond to equality monitoring questions included in the survey.

Detailed findings

What is your age?

214 individuals provided a response to the question 'What is your age'.

What is your age?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Under 11	1	0.5%
11-17	3	1.4%
18-24	6	2.8%
25-34	23	10.7%
35-44	44	20.6%
45-54	57	26.6%
55-64	52	24.3%
65-74	21	9.8%
75+	2	0.9%
Prefer not to say	5	2.3%
Total	214	100.0%

What is your gender?

213 respondents responded to the question 'What is your gender?'

What is your gender?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	70	32.9%
Female	136	63.8%
Other	3	1.4%
Prefer not to say	4	1.9%
Total	213	100.0%

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

213 respondents answered the question 'Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?'

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes, limited a lot	23	10.8%
Yes, Limited a little	6	2.8%
No	171	80.3%
Prefer not to say	13	6.1%
Total	213	100.0%

What is your ethnic group?

214 respondents answered the question 'What is your ethnic group?'

What is your ethnic group?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
White	199	92.99%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	1	0.47%
Other ethnic group	4	1.87%
Prefer not to say	10	4.67%
Total	214	100.0%

What is your religion or belief?

209 respondents answered the question 'What is your religion or belief?'

What is your religion or belief?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
No religion	63	30.1%

What is your religion or belief?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Christian (all denominations)	126	60.3%
Muslim	1	0.5%
Buddhist	0	0.0%
Hindu	0	0.0%
Jewish	0	0.0%
Sikh	0	0.0%
Any other religion	6	2.9%
Prefer not to say	13	6.2%
Total	209	100.0%

[Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?](#)

152 respondents answered the question 'Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?'

Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Heterosexual or straight	188	89.1%
Gay or Lesbian	8	3.8%
Bisexual	4	1.9%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	11	5.2%
Total	211	100.0%

Addressing the challenges of reaching seldom heard and under-represented communities

Challenges in receiving feedback which is fully representative of our population is a learning point for the City of Culture working group, and something which we would want to address if Wrexham was successful in becoming City of Culture 2025. Wrexham County Borough Council is not alone in facing challenges in engaging with seldom heard and under-represented communities, many Local Authorities and statutory services find this difficult.

For this engagement, the online forums #Wrecsam2025 and the online survey provided two ways for the population to feedback to us. Additionally, a range of activities were undertaken to engage children and young people in Wrexham's bid for City of Culture 2025.

Wrexham is leading the way in the development of a co-production approach. Wrexham Public Services Board is currently working closely with the Co-production Network for Wales to embed a co-production approach to the development of services within Wrexham County Borough.

City of Culture status would enable greater resource to be available in order to find different ways to connect with people and to understand what those who live and work in Wrexham really value about their County Borough, what makes them proud to live and work in Wrexham and what new opportunities could be created to address the needs of our local communities.

8. Other Information

Wrexham PSB Well-being Assessment

The timing of the City of Culture bid correlates with the production of the Wrexham Public Services Board's Well-being Assessment, which will shape well-being planning in Wrexham County Borough for the next five years.

The Well-being Assessment, due to be published on 5th May 2022 on the Wrexham PSB website [Wrexham PSB - Public Services Board](#) includes an overview of the most recent demographic data for Wrexham County Borough, and a section on Culture, which is identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) as one of the four pillars of well-being. The assessment, informed by a wide range of data sources and extensive engagement with the local community, includes an overview of the range of tangible and intangible cultural assets within Wrexham County Borough, participation in cultural activities and subjective well-being.

When citizens were asked as part of this assessment, for their views on how Wrexham County Borough's cultural well-being could be improved, they said:

- More community events. Investment in regular cultural events, food festivals, live music.
- More support for the Welsh language. Improved opportunity to learn Welsh in the community, opportunities to use it in social settings and the workplaces and use it in street signage.
- Recognition and support for other cultures. Wrexham is a diverse county, opportunities for people to participate and celebrate their own culture, supporting community cohesion.
- Promote local and Welsh history and culture. Supporting and signposting local history groups and teaching local history in school.

9. Conclusions

An interim engagement report was produced in January 2022 to inform Wrexham County Borough's bid for City of Culture 2025. In March 2022 Wrexham County Borough was shortlisted for City of Culture 2025.

This final report summarises the findings of Wrexham's City of Culture 2025 engagement and continues to inform the bid application process.

Wrexham County Borough hope to be successful in their bid to be City of Culture 2025. However, regardless of the final outcome of the Wrexham County Borough's application for City of Culture, feedback from this engagement will be of value for future planning in Wrexham County Borough.