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Title	Local Elections 2027 - Public Awareness and Engagement Campaign
Date	6th November 2026

OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

1. **To approve the proposed 'Your Town. Your Voice.' campaign ahead of the May 2027 Town Council elections and authorise officers to implement.**

1. Purpose

1. To seek the Committee's approval for a programme of public awareness and engagement ahead of the May 2027 Town Council elections, aimed at increasing understanding of the role of Welshpool Town Council, encouraging participation in local democracy and promoting opportunities for residents to stand for election.

2. Background

1. The next ordinary elections to Welshpool Town Council are scheduled to take place on Thursday 6 May 2027.
2. Town and community councils play an important role in local democracy, providing services, managing community assets and representing the interests of their communities. However, residents may not always be aware of the responsibilities of their Town Council, the decisions it makes or the opportunities available to become involved.
3. Ahead of the elections, there is an opportunity for the Council to undertake a coordinated programme of public engagement to increase awareness of its work and encourage residents to consider standing for election.
4. The proposed campaign would be politically neutral, providing factual information about the Council, the role of elected members and the election process without promoting any individual candidate or political party.
5. The Council's recent budget consultation and interactive budget simulator also highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for engagement through both digital and traditional methods. The proposed campaign has therefore been designed to reach residents through a combination of online resources, printed publicity and face-to-face activities.

3. Proposed Campaign

1. The campaign will be titled 'Your Town. Your Voice.' and will use consistent branding across a range of materials, with the central message encouraging residents to learn more about their Town Council and consider whether they could become a Town Councillor.

2. The proposed campaign would comprise the following activities.
    1. Household Leaflet Drop
        1. A bilingual, double-sided A5 leaflet would be produced explaining the role of Welshpool Town Council, the responsibilities of councillors and how residents can find out more about standing for election.
        2. It is proposed to distribute the leaflet to households within the SY21 7 postcode sector using Royal Mail's Door to Door service which is around 1003 households.
        3. The leaflet would include details of the Council's information evening, a dedicated campaign webpage and a QR code providing access to further information.
    2. Outdoor Publicity Banners
        1. A series of 4 outdoor banners would be produced and displayed at prominent locations around Welshpool.
        2. The banners would feature the campaign branding, the message “Could You Be a Town Councillor?” and information directing residents to the Council's campaign webpage.
    3. Interactive “Be a Councillor” Game
        1. Building on the approach adopted for the Council's interactive budget simulator, an online game would be developed to give residents an insight into the types of decisions faced by Town Councillors.
        2. Participants would be presented with realistic scenarios involving matters such as community facilities, open spaces, local events and Council finances.
        3. The game would demonstrate the importance of considering competing priorities, community needs and financial constraints when making decisions. The resource would be educational rather than a test, with no requirement for previous knowledge of local government.
    4. Council and Prospective Candidates Information Evening
        1. An informal public information evening would be arranged at Welshpool Town Hall, provisionally during February 2027.
        2. The event would provide an opportunity for residents to learn about the work of the Council, the responsibilities and commitments associated with becoming a councillor, and the process for standing for election.
        3. Consideration would also be given to a daytime drop-in session to accommodate residents who may be unable to attend an evening event.
    5. Dedicated Campaign Webpage and Candidate Information Pack
        1. A dedicated webpage would be established on the Council's website, providing a central source of information about the forthcoming elections and opportunities to become involved.

2. The webpage would include information on the role of the Council, councillor responsibilities, eligibility requirements, ward arrangements, meeting commitments and the nomination process.
3. A downloadable candidate information pack would also be prepared, supported by printed copies for residents who prefer to access information offline.

6. Social Media and Outreach
    1. A programme of social media posts would be delivered in the months preceding the elections, explaining the role of the Council, addressing common misconceptions and encouraging residents to consider standing.
    2. The campaign would also be promoted through local press coverage, community organisations, noticeboards and other communication channels.
    3. The campaign would also outreach with groups such as the WI, Rotary Club, U3A and local churches.

4. Timetable

1. The proposed timetable is that the campaign would begin in January 2027 and lead up to the election in May. During the March, April and May period, information will have to be neutral in accordance with pre-election rules.

5. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. CO4 - Publish simple infographics of finances, projects and performance
2. CO3 - Launch printed newsletter to every household and continue every sixth months
3. Town Clerk's Appraisal

6. Resource & Legal Implications

1. The campaign has been provisionally costed at around £450 excluding officers time. It would be delivered using existing staff. The Admin - Marketing budget would support delivery.
2. The Council would ensure that its communications comply with the applicable statutory requirements and the Welsh Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. The Council has powers under the Local Government Act 1972 to provide publicity.

7. Accessibility

1. A central consideration in developing the campaign is ensuring that opportunities to participate are not restricted to residents who use digital technology.
2. The proposed household leaflet distribution, outdoor banners, public information evening and printed candidate information packs would complement the online resources and social media campaign.
3. The campaign would encourage participation from all sections of the community and provide factual, impartial information to anyone interested in standing for election.
4. The campaign would form part of the Council's wider preparations for the May 2027 elections and the subsequent induction of newly elected members.

8. Recommendation

1. To approve the proposed 'Your Town. Your Voice.' campaign ahead of the May 2027 Town Council elections and authorise officers to implement.

9. Decision

1. To resolve to adopt the recommendations as above.