

Policy for Dialogue with Residents

Adopted by the City Council Assembly on 6 February 2014



Programme



Policy



Action Plan



Guidelines



VÄSTERÅS STAD

Västerås Vision 2026

"Together for Västerås

The city of Västerås is bubbling with enthusiasm. People want to participate and contribute to building a better future. As a result, we are curious about each other, our similarities and our differences. Diversity is our greatest asset and creates opportunities. We have strong respect for each other and our city.

Our open, non-judgmental attitude allows us to grow and challenge each other. We are making sure that everyone can enjoy prosperity and a sense of being safe. Our residential areas, Lake Mälaren district and countryside are full of commitment and the desire for change. Our potential is our strength and we have the wisdom to use it."

Strategic Plan for 2012-2015

"Residents of Västerås are in close contact with decision-makers and believe they can make a difference and influence things around them.

Democracy is important in order for all of us to work together. The people who live in Västerås must know that their voices are heard and that they can affect the decision-making process."

Programme

express values and attitudes for improving Västerås as a place to live, work, visit and do business in, including the City of Västerås Group

Policy

express values and attitudes for the work of the City of Västerås Group

Action Plan

specify strategies and concrete actions to achieve policy objectives, as well as the goals that have been set at various levels of the organisation

Guideline

ensure correct procedures and high quality when it comes to the assistance and services that the City of Västerås Group offers

Introduction

In line with the city's vision and strategic plan, the purpose of residents' dialogues are to use the knowledge, skills and experiences of residents to make Västerås an even better place to live, work, visit and do business in.

The dialogic approach sustains and cultivates confidence and trust in our democratic processes and systems. The approach reinforces the ability of our residents to participate and contribute to local social growth and development. Use of dialogue as part of the decision-making process gives the city's elected officials a broader basis for making their decisions. Proceeding from the policy, we strengthen processes that contribute to openness, participation and transparency.

Principles and attitudes

Dialogue with residents of Västerås shall exhibit:

Courtesy and respect

An active dialogue must be respectful and inspire confidence. Communication must be characterised by recognition and sensitivity to the views and opinions of each individual. The particular perspectives of various target groups must be taken into consideration.

Ability of everyone to participate

Residents' dialogues shall be carried out in a way that shows respect and consideration of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other individual qualities. The methods must be based on the nature of the issue at hand, as well as the needs and capabilities of the various target groups. The people who are invited to take part in dialogues must reflect demographic diversity.

Clarity

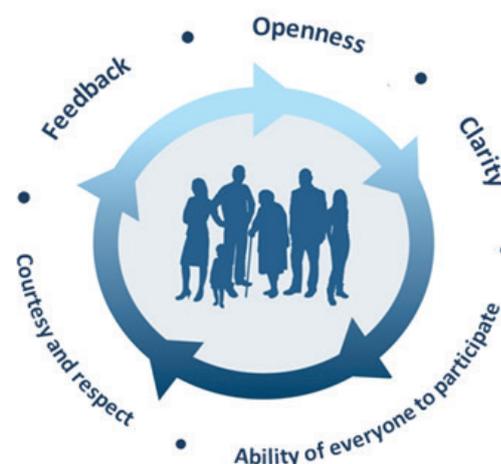
The guidelines and conditions for the dialogue shall be simple, correct, clear, factual and conducive to personal reflection.

Openness

Participants need to be informed about the purpose of the dialogue, the procedures for carrying it out, the ongoing decision-making process and how the results are going to be used.

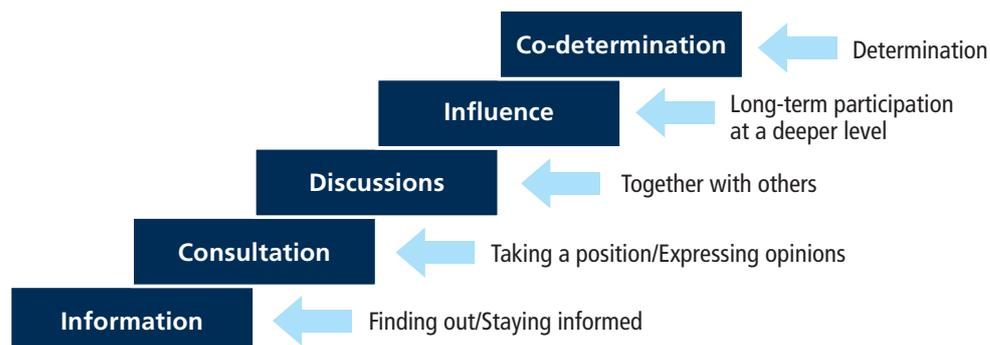
Feedback

Because residents' dialogues are associated with change initiatives, ongoing communication is particularly important. Ensuring feedback during a dialogue promotes democratic processes.



Residents' dialogue as part of the decision-making process

As a means of strengthening the system of representative democracy, residents' dialogues must be incorporated into the city's decision-making process. The nature of the issue at hand determines the optimum use of the dialogue to accomplish its purpose. Dialogue can be conducted in various ways, as well as at different levels and types of participation.



As decision-making documentation is compiled concerning the issue at hand, planning, implementation and methods for considering the input of the participants in the residents' dialogue shall be included. Direct involvement of residents in decision-making (co-determination) requires separate policy statements.

Clients

Clients refer to residents who directly need and/or use the assistance and services that the city offers, such as a preschool opening, home help services, applications for a building permit and renting a parking space.

Client perspective

Client perspective refers to understanding how clients look at the specific service or type of assistance that the city offers. Such awareness is vital to the ability of the City of Västerås to improve the services it offers to residents.

Residents

Residents refer to all inhabitants, citizens, visitors, community groups, the private sector and other organisations in the city.

Residents' perspective

Residents' perspective refers to viewing the skills and knowledge of residents as an asset in building the future of Västerås. Using a number of different methods to understand the values of residents strengthens democracy and improves efficiency.