

Moss  
council

# Participation Plan 2024-2030

Approved by the municipal city council 11th February 2025.



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## The Moss way!

Our vision: "Diversity in Moss – creative, warmer and greener" shows the path forward. We have diversity in our population, our culture, our sports, our nature and our commerce, and we want diversity to continue to characterise the development of the community.

The participation plan has adopted the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) no. 17 "Partnerships for the goals" as its fundamental sustainability goal. Relevant legislation and municipal planning define its scope of operation.

Citizen involvement, cooperation and co-creation are essential for resolving community issues and for achieving the city council's goals. All sectors should strive to help build good local communities and promote co-creation, to discover the best way to resolve a need or challenge.<sup>1</sup> Several of the initiatives involve establishing routines and support functions that provide a basis for a common direction in the participation effort, and for enabling the Municipality of Moss to develop into a co-creative municipality.

No one knows everydaylife i Moss better than the people who live there. With this plan we aspire for everyone to get involved and participate in processes that strengthen local democracy!



1. [kommuneplanens-samfunnsdel-moss-2030.pdf](#)

## What is our end goal?

It is important for the Moss city council to build trust in the community by promoting good communication and safeguarding citizen participation and democratic decision-making processes.<sup>2</sup> To establish a good basis for participation where citizens have a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes, we must facilitate for citizen involvement beyond the minimum required by law. Moss aims to be at the forefront of participation by becoming a co-creative municipality, where we come together in the local community to develop and tackle challenges and tasks.

The participation plan is an internal management tool, defining how Moss plans to approach involvement, participation and co-creation.

### Main objectives

The main objective of the participation plan is:

*"Moss city council builds local democracy through diverse co-creation and broad participation."*

The participation plan describes participation at system and group level, such as community and service development. In this context, the term "service development" refers to development at group level and not to the development of a specific service aimed at individuals. Service development is aimed at specific groups in the community, e.g. children in kindergarten, pupils in primary and lower secondary school, those who live in institutions, those who use home-based services, etc. user councils, participation councils, pupils' councils and parents' committees are important groups we need to involve.

### Purpose

The purpose of the participation plan is to:

1. Promote a culture of involvement, participation and co-creation.
2. Stake out a course and clarify the expectations regarding participation.
3. Tackle societal problems in collaboration with the Moss community.
4. Strengthen representative democracy.
5. Ensure good participation processes.
6. Ensure good decision-making processes.

## Principles

The council's communication strategy<sup>3</sup> provides guidelines for how to communicate and interact with various groups. All use of social media must comply with the guidelines.

The following principles also apply in the context of involvement, participation and co-creation:

1. We treat citizens with respect.
2. Service users and citizens feel included.
3. We have diverse and representative participation by encouraging and facilitating active engagement from various groups within the community.
4. We invite groups into participation processes at an early stage.
5. We have secure, predictable and transparent participation processes.
6. We ensure universal design<sup>4</sup> in all participation processes.
7. Our discussion points are relevant and easy to understand.
8. We provide comprehensible feedback.
9. We seek involvement from and facilitate participation in all sectors.

## Target groups

- Elected representatives
- Citizens
- Community contributors in Moss

This includes public authorities, non-profit clubs and organisations, residents' associations, commercial enterprises and religious communities.

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3. [Kommunikasjonsstrategi-Moss-kommune-vedtatt2022.pdf](#)

4. The "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (CRPD) was adopted by the UN General Meeting in 2006 and ratified by Norway in 2013. The Convention aims to prevent discrimination based on disability and ensure respect for the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of persons with disabilities ([FN-konvensjonen om rett til menneske med nedsett funksjonsevne \(CRPD\) – regjeringen.no](#))



## Involvement, participation and co-creation

### Participation and involvement

Participation is a process and a fundamental premise in a local democracy. Participation can refer to electoral participation, but it is also important in the periods between elections.<sup>5</sup> Participation affords citizens the opportunity to use their own knowledge and experience to take action and influence their own future, community and service development, as well as to achieve better solutions. It's the right to voice one's opinion and to have one's opinion be heard.<sup>6</sup>

Participation is founded in various legislation and is a process that occurs at both individual and group levels, as well as at system and service levels. Even though much participation is mandated by law, the legislation itself says little about how participation actually should take place. A great deal is left up to the councils. Going beyond the minimum required by law - beyond transparency, consultation and information – is to ensure active, true participation, building the foundation to effect the outcome.<sup>7</sup>

Participation promotes active residents, identity, belonging, community and trust in local democracy. In addition to participation improving public health and social sustainability, the end result is also often better. Decisions have greater legitimacy, making implementation easy. It may therefore be valuable to promote dialogue and engagement in processes where citizen participation is not legally mandated.<sup>8</sup>



Photo from reference group meeting on 12/03/2024

5. [Innbyggermedvirkning-interaktiv.pdf \(ks.no\)](#)

6. [Innledning til medvirkning - Østfold fylkeskommune \(ofk.no\)](#)

7. [Syv prinsipper for medvirkning - Østfold fylkeskommune \(ofk.no\)](#)

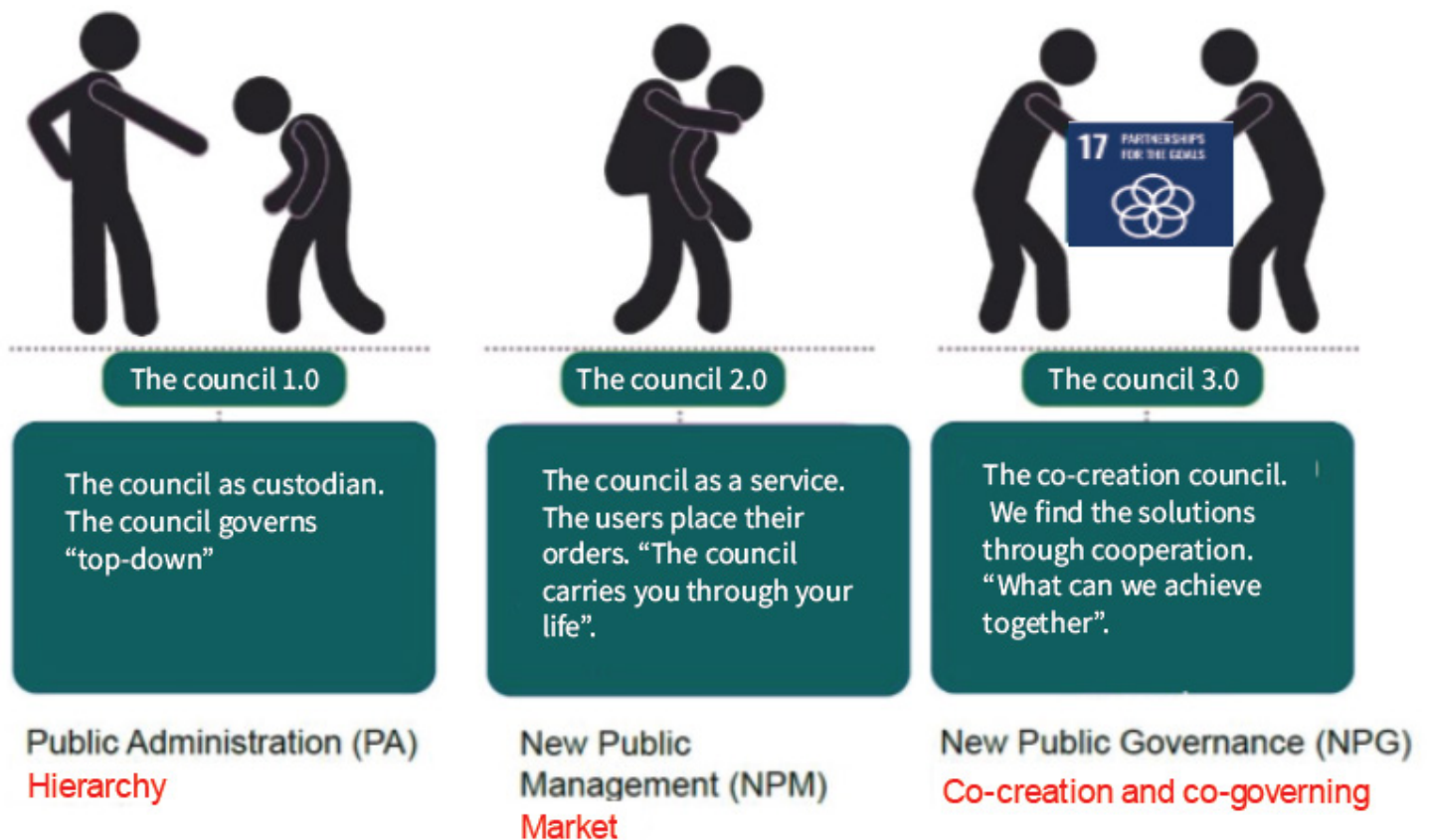
8. [Innbyggermedvirkning - KS](#)

## Co-creation

Co-creation take place when we bring together diverse participants in mutually engaging partnerships for collaboration.<sup>9</sup> Solutions are developed and implemented with active citizens instead of imposed on a passive populace.<sup>10</sup> Such true co-creation and participation can encourage active and engaged citizens, innovation from the presentation of new perspectives and solutions, ownership of development and services or experiences better tailored to individual users and groups.<sup>11</sup>

There is no definitive right way to implement co-creation, and there are different levels of co-creation. Co-creation is unique to each specific case. The goal is to create robust, sustainable and accurate solutions to complex social challenges.

The illustration below, borrowed from Asker city council, is based on a model from Skanderborg in Denmark,<sup>12</sup> and shows the development of the city council's role, from 1.0: an "authoritarian", to 3.0: a co-creative council, where residents are included as a resource and as partners in new forms of co-creation and cooperation.



9. [Samskapende sosial innovasjon - KS](#)

10. [handbok-for-samskaping.pdf \(ks.no\)](#)

11. [Prioriterte mål i kommunalt og fylkeskommunalt planarbeid \(ks.no\)](#)

12. [Borrowed from Kunnskapsgrunnlag Temaplan Medborgerskap \(asker.kommune.no\)](#)

## Participation ladder

The participation ladder illustrates different degrees of citizen involvement. Each step offers more opportunities for participation, greater influence and impact on political processes. Your position on the ladder may vary, depending on the nature of the issue. The purpose is not to force all participation processes as high on the ladder as possible, but rather to ensure that the mode of participation enables the intended outcome. To clarify the purpose, it could be useful to start each participation process by determining where on the ladder the participation is going to take place.

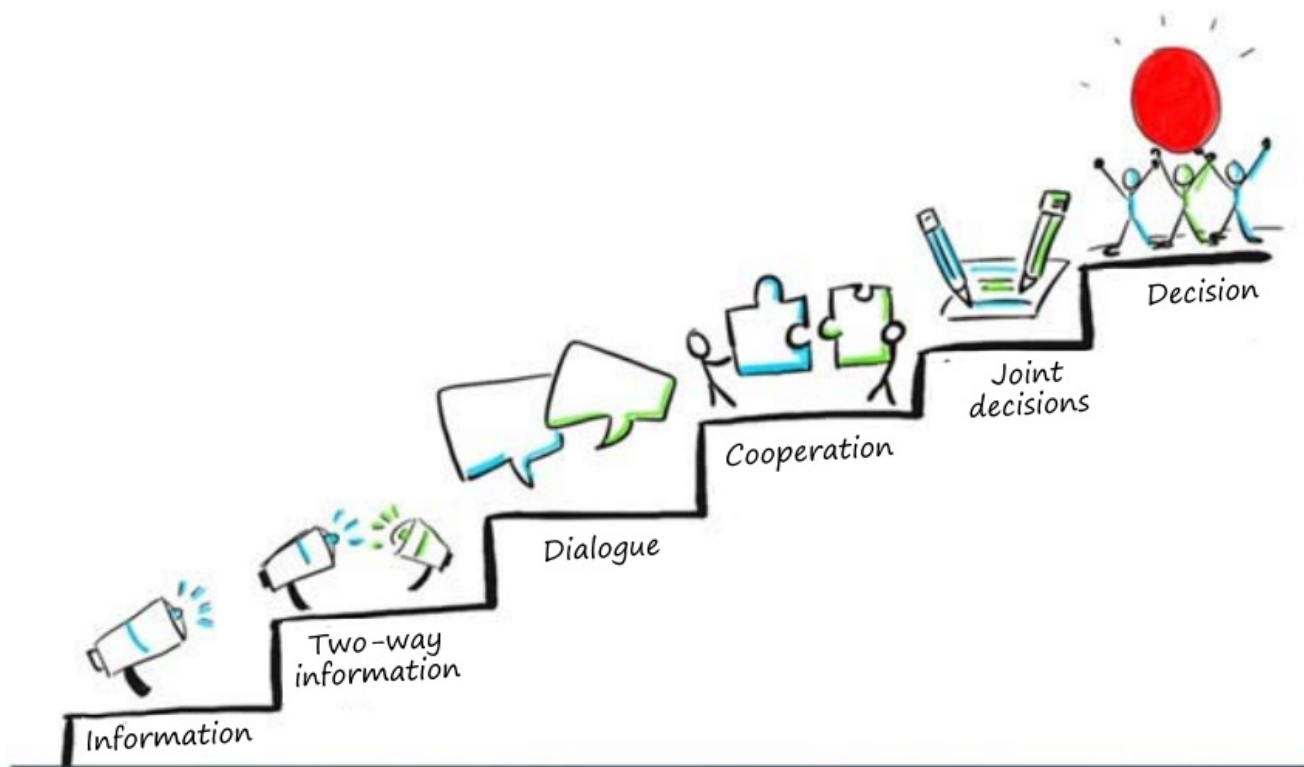
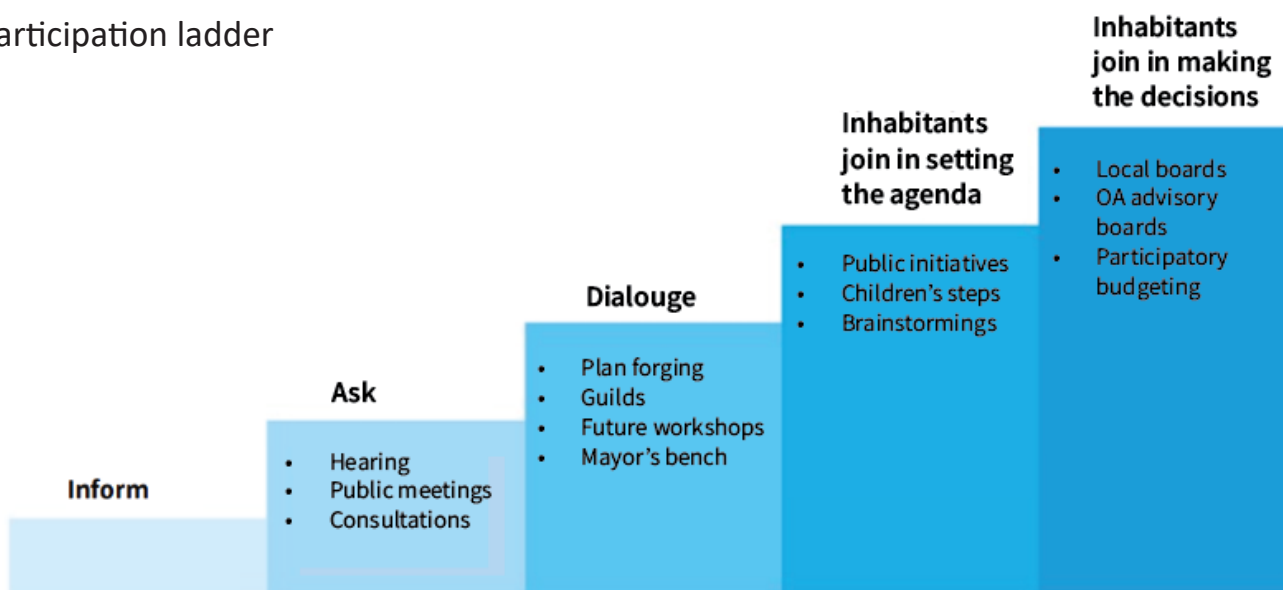


Illustration: Participation ladder<sup>13</sup>

The bottom steps of the participation ladder are where information is exchanged in various ways, whereas the top steps are where it is possible to influence the decisions that are made. Examples of methods for the different ladder steps are shown in the KS illustration below.<sup>14</sup>

## Participation ladder



13. The illustration is borrowed from: Trinn i deltakelsestrappa. Based on Arnstein (1969) et. al. [Involvering av barn og unge i lokal samfunns-utvikling – Distriktssenteret](#)

14. [Kommunikasjon og medvirkning - forutsetninger for aldersvennlig utvikling - KS](#)



## Priority areas

An essential part of representativeness and legitimacy in the final product is that different community groups have had a chance to be heard. Differences include age, geographic areas, ethnic origin, gender, religious beliefs, disabilities, education and interests. The municipality has a particular responsibility to ensure participation from groups that require special adaptations, including children and young people. The municipality must ensure that *"(...) groups and interests that are unable to participate directly must be provided with good opportunities for participation in other ways."*<sup>15</sup>

Østfold County Authority points out the uneven participation in society. People with immigrant backgrounds are less likely to vote and even less likely to participate in non-profit organisations and activities than the population as a whole. People with disabilities experience barriers when participating in community life and in recreational activities.<sup>16</sup>

Diverse participation is a fundamental principle in the plan. Systematic communication initiatives, such as clear language, the use of imagery, translations and exploring potential opportunities to provide feedback in various languages will be important priority areas in the effort to achieve greater diversity. We will monitor developments related to digitalisation and artificial intelligence, including in the context of participation initiatives.

In order to strengthen local democracy through diverse co-creation and broad participation, three priority areas have been identified, each with targets, strategies and initiatives. The principles we have identified are at the core of these priority areas. Strategies and initiatives have been listed in non-prioritised order, with an overview of responsibilities. Results will be subject to continuous evaluation, and initiatives will be adjusted as needed. At the end of the planning period, the plan will be evaluated from a broad perspective in light of the main goal.

### Resources and estimated costs

Participation requires resources that are difficult to measure in financial terms. Participation always requires human resources, time invested before, during and after a participation process, facilities, catering, etc. An attempt should always be made to calculate cost associated with participation, and major initiatives must always be included in budget management.

### Allocation of responsibility

All development projects must assess to what extent participation is needed. All sections, units and departments in Moss city council share the responsibility to ensure participation. However, there are some units/departments that have been assigned special responsibility for certain initiatives. This does not mean that they alone are responsible for implementation, but rather that they have a special responsibility to initiate and to oversee the task.

The process owner has also been made responsible for several initiatives. The term process owner in this context refers to the professional person/unit that has been made responsible for the project/development where a participation process is to be included.

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15. [Lov om planlegging og byggesaksbehandling \(plan- og bygningsloven\) - Kapittel 5. Medvirkning i planleggingen - Lovdata](#)

16. [regionale-planer\\_20231608.pdf \(ofk.no\)](#)

## Priority Area 1: Participation planning

A clear framework for what is expected in participation meetings, early invitation, awareness of who is invited to participate and why, is an essential factor in ensuring a good start to effective participation processes.

What do we hope to achieve with participation? At what point in the process do we want input? How will the process be carried out? With whom do we wish to establish dialogue? The answers to these questions should inform the type of participation that is chosen.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, it is important to assess whether participation is actually needed. Are there any previous participation processes from similar projects, from which feedback can be retrieved and re-applied? Inviting participation repeatedly without applying the results from previous reviews will not necessarily contribute with new knowledge and could actually lead to "participation fatigue".<sup>18</sup>

There is a major difference as to whether participation is sought in connection with the development of a municipal sector plan, in connection with service development or in connection with the planning of a new meeting place for young people. Whether co-creation or other types of participation are more appropriate must be decided in each individual case. Different cases require different approaches. In fulfilling its mandated responsibilities, the council must maintain management, but in other contexts, the council is better suited to assume more of a background role.

### Strategies and initiatives to ensure good participation planning

A good approach to participation is essential for ensuring good processes. Good inclusion processes at an early stage can simplify later implementation. A quick implementation without sufficient participation from affected interest groups does not necessarily lead to more effective processes.<sup>19</sup> We aim to be conscious of which groups are participating and which groups should also be consulted. The participation ladder and stakeholder analyses are key initiatives for Priority Area 1.

To make it easy for citizens and other stakeholders to know when, how and what to contribute, clear language and information on a wide range of platforms is important. Information should be easy to find on the council's website, and we will prepare a simpler and more brief version of the participation plan.

We must define where in the process we will invite participation, and what the framework is. This approach simplifies participation processes – both in terms of implementation and participation. Communication tools can be useful in participation processes. A plan should be developed at an early stage, especially for larger processes, and preferably in the initial phase of the process. The communication department has good templates for communication plans, and these can be made available to all council staff.

To ensure good implementation of the participation plan, it is essential that cross-departmental initiatives, such as preparing routines/guidelines/checklists/web pages that describe the planning, implementation and follow-up of participation, etc. are managed by a single key person. This key person – a participation adviser – will drive the participation effort within the municipality.

Priority Area 1 has five subsidiary objectives, nine strategies and 16 initiatives.

17. Idehefte om medvirkningstiltak, KS

18. [Sjekkliste for medvirkning - Tverga/FoU 2017-04. Å høre til og bli hørt. UngdomsinnvolveringKom.pdf \(oslomet.no\)](#)

19. [h2302b\\_veileder\\_medvirkning.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

Participation planning		
What we want <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We know why we want participation.</li> <li>• We are intentional about who we invite and when.</li> <li>• We have diverse participation processes.</li> <li>• We plan participation and co-creation processes across fields and departments.</li> <li>• We invite participants to join in the planning process where appropriate.</li> </ul>		
How we get there	How we do it	Responsibility
1.1 We will build a culture and enthusiasm for participation.	Among other things, we are using the start page actively.	Administrative leadership
1.2 We have established a common direction in our participation efforts.	We develop routines for the different stages in participation processes, such as early inclusion, evaluation, documentation and follow-up of feedback. Routines should also include how we ensure internal participation and how the council share information about projects/planning/developments.	Participation adviser
1.3 We know why we want participation.	We prepare a checklist/guidelines for participation. The guidelines also specify legal requirements and requirements for the protection of personal data (GDPR).	Participation adviser
1.4 We will describe issues using simple and specific language.	We comply with the principles for clear language, use imagery and translate texts as needed.	Process owner
1.5 We will clarify expectations from the very beginning of all processes.	We will use the participation ladder.	Process owner
	We will prepare a communication plan.	Process owner In major processes, the communication department should be involved designing the plan, and in some cases, they should be made responsible for communication.
	We will provide information about evaluation plans.	Process owner
1.6 We will adapt the scope of participation to whatever is appropriate, relevant and necessary.	We conduct stakeholder analyses prior to all participation processes.	Process owner
1.7 We will ensure representation and are striving to ensure diversity, depending on scope and process	We conduct stakeholder analyses prior to all participation processes.	Process owner
	We will consult with resources/contact persons in local communities, interest groups, clubs and associations.	Process owner
1.8 We will make it easy for citizens to know when and how they can participate.	We will create a participation portal on the municipality's website, with information in several languages.	The communication unit will create this. The process owner is responsible for the information in the portal, just like all other online information.
	We prepare a brochure/brief version/animation of the participation plan.	Communication unit
1.9 We have sufficient resources and knowledge to plan, implement and follow-up on participation.	We have a participation advisor.	Senior management team
	Key persons are trained in co-creation and participation activities.	All council areas
	Sufficient time and resources will be allocated – to be clarified before initiation.	All council areas
	We have a multidisciplinary and cross-departmental participation network for sharing experiences and developing skills.	The participation adviser leads, all municipal areas take part.

## Priority Area 2: Participation implementation

Ensuring that participation is well-implemented is important for achieving a good end result. The implementation of participation is about establishing a foundation within the council, in permanent bodies and user councils, in the population, in the non-profit sector, in religious communities, etc. Participation in the municipality a wide variety of initiatives, including information meetings, breakfast meetings, surveys, interviews, focus groups, Kids' Tracks and sociocultural site analyses, as well as formal consultation processes in accordance with the Planning and Building Act.

Knowing how, when and with whom to participate inspires confidence in the participation process. KS spells it out: "Why + who + when = how" Priority Area 2 is about the "how".<sup>20</sup>

### Strategies and initiatives to ensure participation is implemented

Using established meeting places to meet citizens wherever they are is a method well-suited to ensuring representation and local support. Outreach initiatives can also increase engagement and lower the threshold for participation. We plan to test out new approaches. Neighbourhood committees to promote active local democracy are found in various forms in various places, including Drammen, Asker and Fredrikstad. We should gather experiences from these initiatives before we launch the pilot neighbourhood committee in Moss. We should also collect experiences from the "Oppgaveutvalg", trialled by Moss in 2022.

User participation is essential in order to be able to offer good services. User councils are one of the formal bodies for user participation, and they have an advisory function in relation to the directors/heads of department. User councils have the power to influence the content and quality of services offered. Minutes and an annual report from user council meetings will be provided to the Health and Life Skills Committee, for their information. Moss city council has established seven user councils, distributed across home care services, sheltered housing and nursing homes.

Moss has five political participation councils, three of which are required by law.<sup>21</sup> Our goal is that the participation councils will be used systematically to obtain representative feedback on service and community development.

The implementation of participation also requires facilities, good tools and methods. The plan emphasises a varied and updated methodology that is easy to find and implement. Suggestions received in connection with this plan include the use of diverse methods, such as pop-up brainstorming, citizen-initiated task forces, the Mayor's corner, Q&A sessions in the municipal council meetings, scenario workshops, surveys and digital platforms, such as QR codes, text messaging and WhatsApp. Information about where and when residents can participate must be communicated clearly. Language can be a barrier to receiving feedback from various population groups, but with the increased use of artificial intelligence this now presents less of a challenge. The council must, however, decide how, with whom and in what way we can use artificial intelligence to translate texts into different languages.

Priority Area 2 has eight subsidiary objectives, six strategies and 14 initiatives.

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20. [Idehefte om medvirkningstiltak, KS](#)

21. Section 5-12. Council for senior citizens, council for persons with disabilities and youth council or other representative bodies for young people. A multicultural council and a mental health council have been set up according to Section 5-7 (Local Government Act).

## Implementation of participation

### What we want

- Our work is knowledge-based.
- We are tailoring our methods, tools and platforms to the specific participation process and target groups.
- We are implementing participation as early as possible in order to receive feedback early in the process.
- We are implementing participation processes that promote identity and a sense of belonging.
- We are utilising local community arenas and meeting places that promote diversity.
- We are engaging in outreach and are meeting citizens where they are.
- We are using local knowledge while also taking inspiration from outside sources.
- We have well-established frameworks for process participation and flexibility.

How we get there	How we do it	Responsibility
2.1 We will ensure support and participation from local communities.	We will explore the potential for using a community app to reach the population more effectively. Simultaneously we will look into developing an app designed for teenagers.	Communication unit
	We will pursue and testing out WhatsApp, etc. for participation purposes.	Communication unit
	We will test out a neighbourhood committee in a pilot project, which is based in one of the municipality's area centres.	Community development unit is initiating. Partners include the innovation unit and Kommunetorget. Operation and follow-up to be determined at a later time.
	We are inviting ourselves into established meeting places throughout the municipality, including pupil councils, parents' working committees (FAU), residents' associations, recreational organisations, religious communities, nursery/kindergarten-parent groups etc., depending on scope and process.	Process owner
2.2 We will ensure user participation through permanent bodies.	We will prepare routines to ensure inclusion of participation councils, in consultation with the participation councils.	Political secretariat in collaboration with the chief municipal executive's representative.
	We have established a user council for the Health and Life Skills sector. A meeting schedule will be prepared, and each user council will hold a minimum of two meetings per year.	The user councils must include at least two users who receive services (or family members of such users), in addition to the unit director and/or department head, along with one to two employees.
	We will explore the potential of establishing semi-permanent feedback committees in connection with larger planning/process initiatives. <sup>22</sup>	Process owner
2.3 We have varied, updated and targeted methods.	We will develop a local participation ladder, with methods and tools tailored to each step.	Working group led by the participation adviser.
	We will explore the possibility of receiving feedback in several languages.	Communication unit
2.4 We will make participation tools digitally available.	A "participation toolbox" will be accessible through the innovation portal.	Innovation unit
	We will post contact information for anyone who has questions about the methods used	Process owner
2.5 We have creative and accessible process facilities.	We have permanent facilities for internal and external participation meetings, with access to necessary equipment and materials.	Community development unit, innovation unit and Kommunetorget
	We will prepare an overview of relevant facilities throughout the municipality.	Participation advisor
2.6 We practice transparency and communicate information about development activities.	Updated facts are available on the municipality's website.	Process owner

22. The municipality has experience with this type of comprehensive participation from its work on the "Leve hele livet" and "Naturmangfoldsplannen" initiatives.



## Priority Area 3: Follow-up

The council receives feedback in various ways. Feedback could take the form of written input, requested in connection with formal and legally required planning consultations or feedback received through the “report to us” function, by post and telephone to Kommunetorget, in workshops, interviews, etc.

How does the municipality process feedback? How do we respond and follow-up? The council of Moss aims to be at the forefront of participation, and following up on participation initiatives is a key priority area.

### Strategies and initiatives to ensure good follow-up of participation

Making feedback available to other officials so that the feedback can be applied in other relevant development projects, will help ensure that the municipality does not repeatedly ask for feedback on the same issues. Geodata has digital tools that can be put to use in innovative ways for the purpose of documenting and highlighting feedback. It is important that feedback reaches decision-makers, and this is guaranteed by including participation as a permanent action item in policy documents.

We want to promote a culture where we respond to and follow up with those who provided feedback, regardless of whether or not the feedback was implemented in the end. Response times will depend on resource availability.

In order to ensure that the organisation learns, both internal and external participation activities and processes should be evaluated, to obtain feedback on the participation experience, which aspects worked well, and what we can improve in the future.

Systematic reporting on participation activities will help ensure that the council delivers on the initiatives outlined in the participation plan.

Priority Area 3 has six subsidiary objectives, five strategies and ten initiatives.

## Follow-up

### What we want

- Service users and citizens feel included in participation processes.
- All feedback will be evaluated, made available and systematised.
- We will respond to feedback if anything is unclear.
- We evaluate participation and co-creation processes.
- We learn from completed participation processes.
- Our participation plan provides measurable results.

How we get there	How we do it	Responsibility
3.1 We will follow up on feedback.	We have tools to evaluate, distribute and systematise feedback, and we will follow up whenever anything is unclear.	Participation adviser will develop. Process owner will implement.
	We will respond with information about how feedback has impacted the planning/process. This also applies to feedback that has not been implemented.	Process owner
	We will evaluate the potential for responding in different languages.	Communication unit
3.2 We will ensure that feedback is made available to others, so that participants do not have to repeat themselves.	We will create a theme-based “feedback bank” in digital maps, where even more complex participation processes can be registered.	PMT/Geodata will lead a multidisciplinary working group to set up a specific application/digital solution, and will ensure that the added information is made available in the municipal communications channels. Process owner will add data.
	We will compile feedback on current issues and publish this on the municipality's website.	Process owner
3.3 We will evaluate participation processes.	We will develop simple evaluation tools.	Participation adviser
	We will perform evaluations in consultation with relevant participants and share the insight with those involved.	Process owner
3.4 We have forums for systematic feedback.	We will inform user and participation councils.	Process owner
	We will share the impact of participation on the municipality's website.	Process owner
3.5 We will report on participation	We will prepare indicators for measuring participation (e.g. the number of cases, use of time and resources) in connection with our annual report.	Participation adviser and financial section

## Appendix 1: About the planning process

### Political foundation

The planning system should promote an integrated perspective, including a multidisciplinary approach and collaboration between and across fields, administrative levels and interests. Planning work should be knowledge-based and build on broad participation and citizen dialogue.

We must inspire confidence in the population by developing good communication and ensuring good participation and democratic decision-making processes.<sup>23</sup>

On these grounds the planning strategy 2020- 2024 was approved including the decision to develop a strategy/thematic plan for participation and involvement.

### Organisation of the planning process

Project group	An interdisciplinary project group with participants from the departments for communication, innovation, Human resources, and the three council sectors; "planning, environmental and technical sector", "cultural, educational and activity sector" and "health and coping sector".
Project owner	The council director.
The management group	The council director, the director for planning, environmental and technical affairs, the department manager for societal development, and the director for organisation.
Reference group	Members from the charity sector, local residents' associations, elected officials (group and committee members), participation councils, commercial enterprises, MKE, volunteer and family coordinator, head safety representative and employee representatives. The reference group has held two workshops.

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23. Planning strategy 2020-2024