

Target benefits of the development programme A Participatory Espoo

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Espoo's main strength lies in its people. We will succeed in whatever we get Espoo residents to participate in. From the point of view of participation, the key challenges of the council term include rapid population growth and the ageing of the population's age structure combined with a simultaneous increase in the number of children. In addition, a significant portion of the population growth is due to the growth of the foreign-language population.

The population of Espoo is growing by about 4,500 people per year. Last year, 21,000 people moved to Espoo and 18,000 people moved away. The remainder of the population growth is due to the excess of births. The attachment of new residents to Espoo and their own residential area will be strengthened through participation opportunities.

60% of Espoo residents voted in the last municipal elections. The degree of activity varied greatly by area and was between 76–38%. The differences between areas have persisted for years. Confidence in decision-making and the city's activities can be improved by increasing transparency, openness and participatory interaction.

The cross-administrative A Participatory Espoo is a development programme that promotes the participation of residents, companies and organisations in accordance with the Espoo story. The goal is Everyone's Espoo, the ease of participation of residents, local activities and independence of residents and the development of influence, democracy and decision-making. Civic activity will define the city of the future and make Espoo internationally appealing.

The long-term goal is for Espoo to have the best-functioning democracy and the most participatory municipal residents in Finland.

Target benefit 1: Residents, businesses and communities will participate in solving common challenges

People have a need to do something meaningful, and the development of technology provides new opportunities for it. We will open up information to be used by city residents and businesses. Social media and other new tools will be implemented alongside traditional resident evenings and surveys to supplement interaction. Parents' meetings, waiting rooms for services, business and community meetings and daily interactions with residents will be utilised to exchange thoughts and ideas. Personnel will be encouraged and trained to involve Espoo residents in development and making an impact.

Target benefit 2: The local activities and independence of residents will flourish

We will support the attachment of new residents to Espoo. In order to be able to participate, municipal residents must be aware of the kinds of opportunities available for that purpose in Espoo and their own residential area. We will ensure that Espoo residents find what they are looking for easily and quickly. Residential areas have facilities for volunteer and organisational activities. The process for assisting organisations and other actors is clear. We will participate in the further

development of the Espoolaiset.fi platform for voluntary work. We will support resident forums and resident associations and the formation and activities of regional development groups in different areas. Obstacles to local activities will be removed. We will support resident activity and local democracy.

Target benefit 3: Residents' confidence in democracy and decision-making will increase

Politics is interesting for residents. Decision-making is open and effective and should be developed further. Officeholders and elected officials are known for appreciative interaction. Residents trust officeholders and elected officials and vote actively. Residents feel that the city and its services are for them and they can influence their development. We will promote confidence, transparency, participatory interaction and openness in preparations and decision-making. We will ensure the participation of different groups by paying attention to, for example, children, young people and immigrants. The city will continuously train its personnel and elected officials in matters of participation.