



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024-25

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

5 DECEMBER 2024

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHARTER AGREEMENT

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To review the proposed amendments to the Shared Community Council Charter Agreement prior to its adoption at Council;
- 1.2 To formalise arrangements to set out a renewed model of engagement between Town and Community Councils and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To review the proposed revisions to the Shared Community Council Charter Agreement as attached at appendix 1 of the report;
- 2.2 To authorise the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications to present a revised version following discussion to Council for approval.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to revise the Shared Community Council Charter Agreement to further strengthen collaborative arrangements between the TCC's and to ensure that the Charter remains fit for purpose.
- 3.2 To refresh and update the commitments set out in the TCC's Shared Community Council Charter Agreement to facilitate good working relationships between Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and TCC's



4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the meeting of the Community Liaison Committee on the 7th May 2019, Members agreed in principle to the adoption of the revised Model Charter, following guidance received from Welsh Government in respect of 'Relationship Building Measures and Charters for Unitary Authorities and Town and Community Councils'.
- 4.2 Since this time representatives from the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (hereby referenced as 'the Council' and TCC's have attended meetings of the Community Liaison Committee and Town and Community Council Clerks forum meetings to strengthen partnership working.
- 4.3 Regular informal meetings and engagement sessions facilitated by the Council, through the Council Business Unit have also been held with the Clerks and Members of the TCC's with officers from across the Council attending to provide advice and support.
- 4.4 Since adoption of the current Charter the Council has appointed a dedicated Liaison Officer within the Council Business Unit who provides a Single Point of Contact and support in a number of areas for TCC's. This has strengthened the communication between the Council and. Examples of the support provided is outlined below:
- Regular Community Council Clerks meetings, providing a forum for clerks to receive relevant updates from the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications and provided opportunity for clerks to share and discuss resolutions to common issues
 - Fortnightly clerks meetings at the start of the Global pandemic to provide advice and support in setting up and operating virtual meetings under the temporary change in legislation to ensure Local Authorities could continue to operate during the pandemic
 - ICT and Governance support in putting in place permanent arrangements in undertaking hybrid meetings in line with legislative changes under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) 2021 Act.
 - Financial assistance to purchase necessary equipment required to operate Hybrid / virtual Council meetings
 - Support in the recruitment process of clerks where vacancies have arisen including advertising vacancies, arranging and attending interviews and preparing contracts for new starters
 - Training support and assistance to clerks including access to the Councils Source training materials
 - Free welsh language courses offered to all Community Councillors and Clerks
 - Code of Conduct training provided by the Council's Monitoring Officer at the commencement of term of office, or upon request.



5. SHARED MODEL CHARTER AND PROPOSED WAY OF WORKING

- 5.1 With updates in legislation, and as good practice, the Charter should be reviewed to ensure it is still fit for purpose and reflects any changes within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- 5.2 The proposed revised Charter attached at appendix 1 sets out a number of broad principles and statements indicating how the Council and the TCCs will continue to work collaboratively for the benefit of local communities; and aims to support structured, regular engagement and communication, based on the key principle of equality of partnership between the two tiers of local government. The Charter outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of both TCC's and the local government, promoting accountability.
- 5.3 The revised charter reflects the seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, from within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, to which the TCC's as well as the Council work to. However, further work will be undertaken in consultation with the TCC's to strengthen these links, which will be made through further revisions to the Charter
- 5.4 The creation of the Community Liaison Committee in 2013, provided a then suitable platform for formal engagement between the Council and the TCCs. Over recent years it has been noted that this platform no longer provides the best model of engagement, with meetings needing to be cancelled due to lack of quorum of members. Meetings held with the TCC Clerks have however been well attended and have encouraged closer and more productive relationships with the Council.
- 5.5 Following discussions with the TCC's and evidenced through well attended clerks meeting, it has become clear that the preferred and most effective method of engagement has been through informal liaison meetings held with the Clerks.
- 5.6 It is therefore proposed to replace the Community Liaison Committee and formalise quarterly engagement meetings with the TCC Clerks, chaired by the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications to build on the development of a mutually beneficial working relationship. Invitations to the meetings will be extended to the Chair of the TCC's once per year. The Council Business Unit will continue to liaise with various officers throughout the Council to ensure relevant information is shared with the TCC's at the clerks meetings.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 There are no Equality or Diversity implications aligned to this report



7 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Welsh Language implications directly arising from this report

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Revisions to the Charter will be taken forward following feedback received and further work will be undertaken in consultation with the TCCs to strengthen working relationships, which will be made through further revisions to the Charter

11 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

11.1 Working in partnership with the Town and Community Council's within Rhondda Cynon Taf links with the four objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan, People And Communities, Work and Business, Nature and the Environment and Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language, as it will help people and Communities to help themselves and assists in building a sustainable Rhondda Cynon Taf.

12 CONCLUSION

12.1 The Welsh Government has been clear that charters should be voluntary and not a statutory obligation, although all TCC'S within Rhondda Cynon Taf have shared the willingness to support and strength partnership working through the original signing of the Charter in 2019 and by their continued support in attending regular Clerks meetings.

12.2 Revisions to the Charter are necessary to reflect new legislation and are deemed as good practice.

12.3 Members are asked to consider the proposed arrangements to formalise current engagement meetings with the TCC's

12.4 Members are asked to agree to the revised Charter and that the document be taken forward to Council for agreement



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

[Community Liaison Committee – 7 May 2019](#)