

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM HELD
REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 16:00**

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

H T Bennett	E L P Caparros	G Chappell	C Davies
S Easterbrook	M J Evans	P Ford	J Gebbie
RM Granville	P W Jenkins	M R John	L Lewis
S Parker	R J Smith	I M Spiller	Y Walton-Davies
MJ Williams	E D Winstanley	T Wood	

Apologies for Absence

Councillor M Lloyd
Scott Allin
Councillor J Tildesley
Councillor M Jones
Kerry Grabham

Officers:

Phillip Angell	Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader
Gary Ennis	Group Manager Business Support
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Guy Smith	Community Asset Transfer Officer

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum dated 14 August 2022, be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to Councillor M Evans being added to the list of attendees who gave their apologies for absence at that meeting.

8. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Group Manager – Business Support presented a report, the purpose of which, was to provide Town & Community Councils with an outline of the process for a full Community Governance Review in Bridgend, to be implemented for the May 2027 Local Elections.

By way of some background information, he advised that the review and implementation of Bridgend Council's ward boundaries and electoral arrangements by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LD&BCW), were implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.

The LD&BCW review also included some consequential changes in two Community Councils: Brackla Community Council and Porthcawl Town Council; and these were also implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.

The Group Manager – Business Support added, that Council also undertook a review of the electoral arrangements in Coity Higher Community Council following a formal request from the Community Council, which was also implemented in time for the May 2022 Local Elections.

The last full Community Governance Review was finalised in 2009 and would normally follow a 10-year cycle. The delays to the completion of the Bridgend Electoral Review and the pandemic resulted in insufficient time to undertake a full review in time for the Local Elections in May 2022.

He explained that the key document that starts the Community Governance Review is called the Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR sets out the proposed timetable and procedures for the review, provides guidance, and sets out the issues that will be considered during the review. It also allows the Council to ensure it is following a set procedure, takes into account appropriate considerations for the review, and allows interested parties to understand how to effectively engage in the review. It also provides the LD&BCW with information as to whether the Council has appropriately conducted the review under the terms of the Act. Further explanation of the ToR was detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

In terms of the electoral arrangements, the review provides the opportunity to consider the degree to which “electoral parity” is achieved across the communities in Bridgend, and across any wards that exist within a community. This is known as a council size policy, and it will consider:

- An approximate councillor allocation per electorate;
- Provision of an overall minimum and maximum number of community councillors for a community council. Historically the minimum number of councillors for a community council has been 7. The largest community council in Wales at present is 24. The maximum size may be dependent on the following factors:
 - The existing community council sizes;
 - The scale of the activity of the community councils;
 - The geography of the Council area; and
 - The population density of the Council area;

If amalgamation of two or more communities is recommended confirmed the Group Manager – Business Support, then the existing community councils would be dissolved and a new separate community area would be established. In these circumstances it is usual for the community to be warded to reflect the boundaries of the former communities that have been amalgamated.

The process will take a minimum of 12 months to complete from the publication of the ToR, once it has been formally approved by the Council. The estimated date for the start of the consultation process is the 1 June 2023 and allows for at least 12 weeks consultation at both the initial investigation stage and the draft report stage.

The Group Manager – Business Support concluded his submission, by advising that the preliminary stage will publish the ToR and then invite initial submissions for the Council to consider in drafting recommendations for any changes to both boundaries and electoral administration. The draft recommendations would then be published, with a further consultation exercise being undertaken inviting further submissions. After consideration of any further submissions, the Council will publish the final recommendations and conclude the review. The final stage is the making of the Order to implement any changes to boundaries and electoral arrangements which will come into force for the May 2027 Local Elections.

A Member felt that there should be a push to try and get members of the public to show an interest in being a Town/Community Councillor, as even following last year's elections, there were still a number of vacant positions on County Borough Town/Community Councils.

A Member felt that any review should be conducted within the relevant timescales outlined in the report and that the review should be adequately guided supported from an administrative perspective, by staff from the local authority.

The Group Manager – Business Support, confirmed that the process and its proposals would be examined more closely and intensely in due course as matters evolved, with the likes of key organisations such as, for example, the Boundary Commission and One Voice Wales. Other local authorities who have been involved previously in this process, could also be consulted he added.

In response to a further Members question, he confirmed that the ToR would include looking at the size of the different electorates and wards once more, as part of any review.

The Leader felt that a progress report should be submitted to the Forum at a future meeting and that it was important that the Clerks of all BCB's Town/Community Councils are updated on this issue and aware of the possible outcomes arising from it.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. **20 MPH DEFAULT LIMIT IN WALES FROM SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Head of Operations - Community Services presented a report on the above item and, following a brief introduction, he referred to the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader to give a presentation.

The Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader, confirmed that the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 published by Welsh Government, identified one of its key priorities to 'change the default speed limit from 30mph to 20mph in built-up areas to reduce traffic related injuries and fatalities and make walking and cycling safer and more attractive'.

It was proposed by enabling a much wider take up of 20mph limits it will achieve significant road safety benefits, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. In the longer term, reductions in the perception of road danger is expected to lead to more walking and cycling which will improve public health and replace some short car journeys, and so achieving further reductions in collisions and casualties. More walking and cycling is also likely to lead to greater social cohesion which brings further societal and health benefits. Furthermore, lower speeds will lead to reductions in traffic noise, while impacts on air quality will be neutral at worst and journey time increases will be slight.

He confirmed that, as part of the new legislation, a 20mph Task Force was created to work closely with local authorities to identify those roads which would be an exception to the legislation. The Authority provided local knowledge and traffic management expertise to help identify those roads which should be an exception to the legislation to help ensure limits throughout the borough are abided to and consequently that the legislation does not fall into disrepute.

As part of his presentation, the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader advised, that from September 2023, a new default 20mph speed limit will apply to most residential and busy pedestrian streets with street lights in Wales.

Proposing to the reduction of default speed limits from 30mph to 20mph in these areas could see a number of benefits, including:

- a reduction in road collisions
- more opportunities to walk and cycle in our communities
- helping to improve our health and wellbeing
- making our streets safer
- safeguarding the environment for future generations.

He confirmed that the above speed restrictions would be introduced by Welsh Government from 17 September 2023.

The Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader, confirmed that the introduction of pilot schemes identified issues in particular with a blanket introduction of the 20mph on all the restricted roads.

A petition submitted within months of the initial proposal, achieved 40,000 signatures suggesting such a blanket 20mph speed limit was inappropriate for all roads, and that there was a need to seek views of communities in relation to this in order to achieve feedback regarding this.

As a result of this consultation, some general exceptions were introduced and not allowed for A and B 30mph roads, if they were situate as follows:

Within 100 metres walk of any educational setting;
Within 100 metres walk of any community centre;
Within 100 metres walk of any hospital;
Where number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds a defined density

Two main questions were therefore considered prior to considering whether a 30mph speed limit should be made in a given location, which were a) are there significant numbers (or potential numbers, if speeds were lower) of pedestrians and cyclists travelling along or across the road, and b) If the answer to this is 'yes', are the pedestrians and cyclists mixing with motor traffic.

With regards to Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader, advised that terminal signs would be allowed at the start and end of the restricted road, however, repeater signs are not allowed within the same area / zone.

Furthermore, if maintaining 30mph on distributor roads, 30mph zones can have repeater signage. This would permit 20mph / 30mph signage at junctions off the distributor roads, potentially increasing driver awareness and road safety in the area, he added.

He further added that, 20mph temporary speed limits outside schools (on 30mph zones) would include illuminated gateways features.

The changes prior to implementation, would require a considerable amount of administrative support, advised the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader, in relation to the making and/or amendment of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's), for example:-

1. The revocation of existing TRO's, completely or partially to 'restricted road' status;

TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM - MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2022

2. The revocation of existing 20mph zones to 'restricted road' status;
3. New TRO's for agreed exceptions;
4. New TRO's for variable speed locations; and
5. New TRO's for gateway features

In terms of the next steps of the process, the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader,

As this included the end of the Officer's presentation, the Leader asked Members if they had any questions of the Head of Operations – Community Services and/or the Traffic Management and Parking Team Leader.

There were a number of questions that were responded to by the Highways Officers, details of which can be found here

RESOLVED: That the report and accompanying presentation be noted.

10. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.