

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

10 JULY 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

ESTABLISHMENT OF A REVIEW PANEL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request that the Town and Community Council Forum establish a review panel to consider the Bridgend County Borough Charter and the format of meetings of the Town and Community Council Forum to improve engagement and strengthen collaborative working between all Councils.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 Effective working relationships between all Council in the County Borough of Bridgend assists in the achievement of all the Corporate Priorities.

1. **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2007 the Welsh Government published a Local Government Policy Statement "A Shared Responsibility" which set out the expectations of Local Authorities and the support that the Welsh Government aimed to provide. It focused on:

- ensuring that public services are centered on the needs and experiences of citizens;
- encouraging specialisation and economies of scale to be achieved through cross boundary collaboration;
- encouraging integration and responsiveness to the diverse needs of citizens to be achieved through cross sector collaboration.

- 3.2 In response to this policy statement a joint guidance document "A Shared Community - Relationship Building and Charters for Unitary Authorities and Community and Town

Councils” was released in 2008 by the Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Welsh Government.

- 3.3 The focal point of the guidance is the emphasis on establishing formal relationships by agreeing a Charter. Charters can enhance relationships within local government in a number of ways, not least because the process of agreeing a Charter entails assessing the values and behaviour which underpin any interaction.
- 3.4 Joint working is always a challenge, and even more so where the number of partners is large and their nature diverse. This situation applies to relationships between unitary authorities and community and town councils since the number and nature of community and town councils differs in each unitary authority area. Consequently, although general principles and good practice will be applicable to all, a pro-active and flexible approach to developing and sustaining positive relationships will be vital.
- 3.5 On 26th May 2009 a Charter for Bridgend County Borough was adopted as the basis for developing positive working relationships between Bridgend County Borough Council and Community and Town Councils within the County Borough.
- 3.6 The Charter was subsequently reviewed, updated and adopted on 18 July 2016 as shown at **Appendix 1**. It was agreed during the review process that the Charter would be reviewed annually to ensure that it remained effective.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 The existing Charter was developed by a working group appointed by the Town and Community Council Forum. It is proposed that a similar working group be established to review the existing Town & Community Council Charter in order to identify opportunities to:
 - develop capacity within the communities of the County Borough
 - minimise the impact of budget reductions to citizens
 - extend relationships with Third Sector and other organisations
- 4.2 The working group should comprise equal representation from Bridgend County Borough Council and the Town and Community Councils. To reflect recent changes to the Forum it is proposed that the working group be formed by 12 elected representatives of the Town and Community Forum as follows:
 - 2 Elected Member representatives from Town Councils,
 - 4 Elected Member representatives from Community Councils and
 - 6 Elected Member representatives from Bridgend County Borough Council.

In addition 1 Clerk from a Town Council and 1 Clerk from a Community Council not represented by Elected Members will also be invited to participate in the working group.

- 4.3 It is proposed that a meeting of the working group be scheduled for 4 September 2017 at 10:00am in Committee Rooms 1/2/3 Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend.
- 4.4 It is acknowledged that the meeting format for the Forum may not fully support the

effective engagement with all Town and Community Councils. Therefore in addition to reviewing the Charter, the working group will consider the format of the meetings of the Town and Community Council Forum and be requested to propose possible changes which will support effective collaborative working.

4.6 It is anticipated that the review group will complete its review of the Charter and the format of the meetings and report back to the next meeting of the Forum on 16 October 2017.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no financial implications.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 It is recommended that the Town and Community Council Forum:

- notes the content of the report
- approves the establishment of a working group as identified in paragraph 4.2 of the report
- appoints representatives to the working group as proposed in paragraph 4.2 of the report
- approves that the first meeting of the working group be held on 4 September 2017 at 10:00.

P. A. Jolley

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

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Contact Officer: Gary Jones
Head of Democratic Services

Postal Address: Level 4 Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Telephones: 01656 643385

Email: Gary.Jones@Bridgend.gov.uk

Background documents: - None