

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

22 October 2018

Comments and Recommendations

Collaboration with Town and Community Councils

Members request that a letter is drafted to One Voice Wales in relation to no representative being presented to attend the meeting to contribute on how best to facilitate collaboration between all Councils. The Committee emphasised that attendance should be encouraged in the future.

The Committee recommend that the report 'Collaboration with Town and Community Councils' alongside the comments and recommendations made at this meeting are presented to the Town and Community Council Forum to initiate debate and gauge appetite for collaboration with Bridgend County Borough Council.

The Committee discussed the differing skills and abilities of town and community councillors and clerks within the Borough and that to understand all capabilities, Members recommend that a skills audit is carried out and ask that the topic is added to the Town and Community Council Forum agenda for discussion.

To strengthen working relationships between Town and Community Council's (TCC's) and Bridgend Council, Members recommend that a protocol is developed outlining appropriate contacts for legal issues and similarly for service queries along with estimated timelines for a response.

The Committee understand the timing issues between the TCC's precept setting and the Council's budget setting process, but indicate the need for the Council to outline possible budget reductions to allow the TCC a longer time period to consider proposals for undertaking future services and assets from the Local Authority.

The Committee voiced their concerns in relation to the Community Asset Transfer Officer's role being extended to include liaison responsibilities with TCC's and query how the possible increased workload will affect his capacity to work effectively.

In relation to the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review Panel when considering the future role of Town and Community Councils, the Committee recommend that a whole Council response is submitted outlining the comments below:

- The Committee raised concerns regarding the recommendation against dual-hatted Members, the Committee disagreed and emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with Town and Community Council's to share best practice and to maintain a constructive connection between both Council's;

- When discussing the devolvement of Council services and their associated budgets to TCC's, Members questioned their capabilities with dealing with County Borough Council budgets. These comments were heightened by the lack of accountability that TCC's need to adhere to.

To assist with encouraging collaborative working between TCC's and to for them to observe the added benefits of merging with other TCC's, the Committee recommend that a pilot is prepared to trial a 'federative Bridgend'.

The Committee emphasised the need to streamline the process for TCC's, voluntary sector and individuals to undertake services on behalf of the Council. Therefore Members recommend that the liaison officer has the delegated power to undertake a risk assessment for applications for supplying assistance and provide suitable permissions.

Additional Information

Members request to receive the rules and regulations for commissioning a formal merger.