

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	21 JUNE 2023
Report Title:	REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ARRANGEMENTS OF ALL TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Responsible Officer:	GARY ENNIS GROUP MANAGER BUSINESS SUPPORT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	THERE IS NO EFFECT UPON THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE RULES
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is asked to adopt the Terms of Reference for a Community Arrangements Review of all Town & Community councils under Section 25 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. • The review will consider creating, merging, altering or abolishing communities; the naming of communities; and the electoral arrangements for communities - council size; number of councillors, and community warding. • 3 stages to the review – Initial consultation phase, draft recommendations report with further period of consultation, and a final recommendation report with a final period of representations to be made to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LD&BCW). • Changes to Communities will take effect from the Local Elections in May 2027. • A member Panel to be set up to review the responses from the Initial consultation; agree the draft recommendations; review any responses to the draft report; and agree the final recommendations for Council to approve and submit to the LD&BCW.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Terms of Reference for a review of Community Arrangements of all Town & Community Councils in the Bridgend council area and set up a Member Panel to oversee the review.

2. Background

- 2.1 The review and implementation of Bridgend Council's ward boundaries and electoral arrangements, by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LD&BCW), was implemented for the May 2022 Local Elections.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The 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.
- 2.4 A review of Community Arrangements is a legal process whereby the Council will consult with those living in the area, and other interested parties, on the most suitable ways of representing the people in the area identified in the review. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented.
- 2.5 The last full Community 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.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Reviews must be carried out in accordance with the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013. Section 25 covers the changes to boundaries and any consequential changes to electoral arrangements; and Section 31 only covers changes to electoral arrangements. The Council must undertake a Section 25 review first and, if necessary, follow up with a Section 31 review.
- 3.2 Any review of Boundaries must reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. A review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries tied to ground features, and to remove any anomalous boundaries that exist.
- 3.2 A review can consider one or more of the following options:
 - creating, merging, altering or abolishing communities;
 - the naming of communities and the style of new communities and the creation of town councils;
 - the electoral arrangements for communities (for instance, the council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and community warding);
 - grouping communities under a common community council or de-grouping communities
- 3.3 Whilst having a Terms of Reference for the review is not a statutory requirement, it is certainly best practice. It sets out the scope of the review, and includes a

timetable for carrying out the review, including dates for public consultation. The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.4 It is recognised that the development of strong, sustainable communities depends on residents' active participation in decision making in respect of the governance arrangements of community councils. The council is therefore committed to engaging effectively with the diverse communities it serves and to enabling local people to participate meaningfully in the creation of effective community governance arrangements where all people feel able to take an active part in influencing service delivery. The timetable in the Terms of Reference includes key consultation periods to allow plenty of time for responses to be received.
- 3.5 The adoption of the Terms of Reference by Council will commence the review. If Council chooses to accept the final recommendations of the review, concluded after public consultation, it will be necessary to submit the recommendations to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales which, following a final 6 week period for representations, will prepare an Order to implement the changes.
- 3.6 To support the effective review of responses to the consultation exercises and agree the draft proposals, it is proposed to create a Member Panel that is both geographical and politically balanced. The purpose of the Panel will be to consider the responses to the initial consultation, agree the draft recommendations, consider any responses to the consultation on the draft recommendations, and agree the final recommendations to be approved by Council.
- 3.7 It is proposed that Council delegate the determination of Members to sit on the Panel to Group Leaders, with the Panel having 9 Members (5 Labour Members and 4 Opposition Members), including representation from the 4 towns and 3 valleys.
- 3.8 Any changes to the arrangement of communities will take effect at the next scheduled Town and Community elections in May 2027.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this review for the Council; any work will be undertaken within existing budgets.

9. Recommendations

9.1 To adopt Terms of Reference for a Community Arrangements Review of all Town & Community Councils in the Bridgend Council area.

9.2 To set up a Community Review Member Panel to review responses to the consultation and agree the draft and final proposals for any changes. The Member Panel will make their recommendations to Council for final approval.

9.3 That Council delegate the membership of the Panel to the Group Leaders to determine.

Background documents

None