

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

21 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

REVISION TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS (TCCs) CHARTER

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Town and Community Council Forum regarding the proposed revisions to the Town and Community Council Charter. Following endorsement by the TCC Forum the revised Charter will be submitted to all Town and Community Councils in the County Borough of Bridgend for approval.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The Charter supports the Welsh Government's (WG) national programme objectives. The Charter paves the way for the proposals contained within the Welsh Government's White Paper Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People.
- 2.2 The Charter links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible; and supporting the development of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver its vision.

3. Background.

- 3.1 Across the UK, local councils are facing unprecedented challenges following reduced Government funding and increased demands on essential services. The Welsh Government is considering the findings of the Williams Commission report which has laid out recommendations for re-organising local authorities, reducing the number of councils and changing the way in which services are delivered in future.
- 3.2 Against this backdrop, the Town and Community Councils Charter was originally developed to recognise that change is expected and to outline the promise of all partners to embrace the challenges ahead in order to achieve outcomes and demonstrate citizen-focused delivery of services.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 At December's meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum it was agreed that a TCC Charter Working Group be established to review the current Charter. The working group consisted of 6 Elected Members from Bridgend County Borough Council and 6 Elected Member representatives from the Town and Community Councils.

- 4.2 The Working Group met on 2 occasions to undertake the review which included the circulation of the existing Charter to all Town and Community Councils to identify any opportunities to improve the Charter. The Working Group carried out a research exercise and contacted other Local Authorities to identify and collate examples of best practice to be incorporate into a revised Charter for Bridgend.
- 4.3 A series of proposals were discussed and the following amendments were agreed for inclusion in the revised draft Charter:
- a) The revised Charter would identify focal points and methods of communication between Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and the TCCs.
 - b) The Charter would be reviewed annually to ensure that it remained current and reflected the developing relationships between Councils.
 - c) An Action Plan would be to be appended to the Charter which would be reviewed at each meeting of the TCC Forum. This would ensure that priorities could be identified and managed appropriately. All Councils would be able to identify accountability of items on the action plan and monitor the progress that was made. Possible topics for inclusion on the initial action plan were identified as follows:
 - i. a list of services to potentially be devolved to TCCs
 - ii. SLAs put in place for services transferred supported by a tapering funding scheme from 3 to 5 years
 - iii. The charter should be developed to provide performance/standards of service indicators
 - iv. Community Asset Transfer and other programmes and projects
 - d) The Charter to become a standard agenda item for the TCC Forum meetings.
 - e) Officer representatives of BCBC and the TCCs to meet one month before the scheduled meeting of the TCC Forum to discuss:
 - i. items to be included on the agenda for the next TCC Forum meeting
 - ii. details of reports to be presented to Scrutiny Committees to assist in identifying opportunities for TCCs to engage in the Council's decision making process.
- 4.4 The Charter has been revised to reflect the promise of all partners to embrace the challenges ahead in order to achieve the required outcomes and demonstrate citizen-focused delivery of services. The revised draft Charter is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The revised Charter once approved would have suitable design applied and be translated for publication.
- 4.6 A plan for implementation of the Charter was discussed by the working group and it was anticipated that the following targets would be progressed:
- a) Presentation of the revised Charter to the TCC Forum - 21 Mar 16
 - b) Approval of the revised Charter by all Councils 30 Apr 16

4.7 It is proposed that once all Town and Community Councils had agreed the revised Charter that a formal Charter signing be held before June 2016 following the election appointment of the Mayor's/Chairpersons for the 2016-17 Civic Year.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 There is no impact on the Council's policy framework or 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 arising directly from this report. However the cost of redesign and translation of the revised Charter will be met from existing budgets.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 It is recommended that the Town & Community Council Forum endorses the revised Charter and recommends it to all Town and Community Councils in the Bridgend County Borough for adoption.

Lee Jones
Head of Regulatory, Partnerships & Transformation
Legal & Regulatory Services Directorate

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Contact Officer: Elizabeth Jones
Project Officer

Telephone: (01656) 642515

E-mail: Elizabeth.Jones@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Level 2, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB

Background documents

Town and Community Councils Charter: February 2016
Matrix of Recommended Amendments: TCC February 2016