

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CABINET

7 JUNE 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

REVISION TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS (TCCs) CHARTER

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet endorsement of the revised Town and Community Council Charter and approval for the plans for its formal adoption by all Councils of the County Borough of Bridgend.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report supports the achievement of the following 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.

- 2.2 The Town and Community Council Charter supports the Welsh Government's (WG) national programme objectives and the Welsh Government's White Paper Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People.

3. Background.

- 3.1 Across the UK, local councils are facing unprecedented challenges following reduced Government funding and increased demands on essential services. The Williams Commission report laid out recommendations for re-organisation of local authorities, reducing the number of councils and changing the way in which services are delivered in future.

4. Current situation / Proposal.

- 4.1 The Town and Community Council Forum agreed in December 2015 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 incorporated 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 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 Action Plan to become a standard agenda item for the TCC Forum meetings.
 - e) Officer representatives of BCBC and the TCC Clerks 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 reflects the intention of all partners to embrace the challenges ahead and to work together in order to achieve the required outcomes and demonstrate citizen-focused delivery of services. The revised draft Charter was approved by the Town and Community Council Forum on 21 March 2016.
- 4.5 A plan for implementation of the Charter was developed and it was anticipated that the following aims would be progressed:
- a) The revised Charter would be redesigned and translated for ease of reading and comprehension.

- b) An electronic copy of the revised Charter would be sent to all Town and Community Councils on 01 June 2016 with a request to confirm by 24 June 2016 that each Council is willing to adopt the "new" Town and Community Council Charter
- c) The next meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum scheduled for 18 July 2016 at 4:00pm would be dedicated to the Charter with all Mayors/Chairs of the Town and Community Councils being invited to represent their Councils in addition to the usual Council representatives.
- d) During that meeting the Town & Community Charter Action Plan for the forthcoming year will be agreed before the Mayors or Chairpersons of all 20 Town and Community Councils and the Leader of BCBC formally sign the "new" Charter.

4.6 A liaison meeting between Officer representatives of BCBC and the TCCs Clerks is being planned to be held before the end of July as introduced in the revised Charter in preparation for the ordinary meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum on 12 September 2016.

4.7 Following the official signing of the Charter in July, the Action Plan and Charter, together with contact details of the relevant TCC members will be published on the Bridgend CBC website. Electronic copies of the new Charter will also be sent to all TCC partners.

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 and the signing event will be met from existing budgets.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve:

- a. the adoption of the revised Bridgend Town & Community Councils Charter
- b. the proposed plans for the formal signing of the Charter.
- c. the improved partnership working arrangements with all Councils in accordance with the Charter.
- d. that the Leader and in his absence the Deputy Leader be authorised to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council.

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Background documents: None