

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

18 JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

THE TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS' (TCCs) CHARTER

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on the development of the Town and Community Councils' (TCCs) Charter, seek approval for the Town and Community Council Charter Action Plan and to formally sign the Charter as approved by the individual Town, Community and the Borough Council in the County Borough.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The Charter will provide the opportunity to assist in 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.

3. Background.

- 3.1 At its meeting on 21st September 2015 the Town and Community Council Forum 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 potentially to 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 to 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.

3.4 The revised Charter was endorsed by the Town and Community Council's Forum on 21 March 2016 and copies of the Charter were sent to all Councils, requesting their approval of the updated Charter, to identify items for the TCCs Charter action plan and to attend a formal signing of the revised Charter in July 2016.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 The revised Charter reflects the commitment of all Councils to work in partnership in order to meet the challenges ahead. It is anticipated that the Charter will assist in the ongoing delivery of citizen-focused services and promote Councils working together for the benefit of all of the residents of the County Borough.

4.2 Town and Community Councils have submitted the following proposals regarding additional items for the action plan

- Bridgend Town Council
The single "Action Plan" to be changed to "Action Plans" to respect the different needs of each individual town and community and that the Charter clearly accommodates each community's different needs.
- Ogmore Valley Community Council
Continued communication is essential for the Charter to succeed.

- 4.3 The proposal to establish meetings between Officers of Bridgend County Borough Council and Officers representing Town and Community Councils has been actioned with the first meeting scheduled for 2:00pm on Tuesday 19 July 2016 in the Civic Offices.
- 4.4 Other proposals in the Action plan shown at **Appendix 1** have been previously agreed. These include:
- The Action Plan to be reviewed at every meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum.
 - The Charter will be reviewed annually.
- 4.5 A Town and Community Council Charter webpage for inclusion on the BCBC website is being finalised and is planned to be published following the official Charter signing ceremony. The content will provide links to the signed Charter, Town & Community Councils' contact information, the Town & Community Council Forum meetings and can include other information as considered appropriate. It is requested that links be provided from each Town and Community Council website to the Charter webpage at www.bridgend.gov.uk/tcccharter.
- 4.6 The Mayors and Chairpersons of each of the Town & Community Councils have been invited to attend this meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum in order, that once proposals for inclusion on the action plan are agreed, the Charter can be signed by all Town and Community Councils and Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 4.7 Formal photographs will be taken at the signing and a press release will be made.
- 4.8 The approved Charter will be available for signing at the committee meeting.

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 with the cost of redesign and translation of the revised Charter being met from existing budgets.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Town & Community Council Forum:
- Identifies any additional items for inclusion in the Charter Action plan
 - Approves the Charter Action Plan
 - Approves that the Charter document be signed by representative of all Councils of Bridgend County Borough.

PA Jolley
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Background documents – None