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| Meeting of: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | Thursday, 25 June 2026 |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee: | No Relevant Scrutiny Committee |
| Item which the Chair has decided is urgent (Part I) (If yes, why) | Not applicable |
| Urgent Decision Procedure Used (15.14 of the Constitution) (If yes, why) | Not applicable |
| Item Type | Part I |
| Report Title: | Review of Ways of Working with Town and Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan |
| Portfolio Holder: | Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources |
| Strategic Leadership Team: | Director of Corporate Resources |
| Lead Officer: | Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services |

1.0 **What is this report about?**

- 1.1 This report seeks to explore how the Principal Council and Town and Community Councils can build upon existing relationships and explore how these can be further improved noting the pressures currently being experienced by both tiers of government with a proposed roadmap for delivery.
- 1.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Council has a longstanding history of working with Town and Community Councils, which is currently set out within the principles adopted as part of the Charter. However, as the relationship has matured and ways of working have developed, there has been reflection from all stakeholders as to how this is currently working and how this could be further improved, with a proposed approach outlined within the report.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

| | Recommendations – What and How? | Reason for Recommendation – Why? |
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| 2.1 | That Cabinet notes the existing ways of working and endorses the need to review ways of working with Town and Community Councils as outlined within the report. | To demonstrate support for the change in strategic approach to working with Town and Community Councils. |
| 2.2 | That Cabinet endorses the provisional plan for reviewing ways of working with Town and Community Councils as outlined in Appendix A. | To demonstrate support for the delivery plan detailing to working with Town and Community Councils. |
| 2.3 | That the report is referred to the next meeting of Community Liaison Committee for further consideration, and then subsequently shared with all Town and Community Councils and One Voice Wales to harness further views. | To allow for representatives of Principal Council, Town and Community Council and One Voice Wales to provide their feedback ahead of implementation. |

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Council operates within a diverse and geographically varied area comprising both urban centres and smaller towns and rural communities. Alongside the Principal Authority, a network of Town and Community Councils (TCCs) provides a layer of very local governance, representing grassroots interests and delivering services that are closely aligned with the needs of residents. In this context, strengthening collaboration between the Council and TCCs is both a strategic opportunity and a practical necessity.
- 3.2 There is a strong policy context in Wales that supports greater collaboration between Principal Councils and Community Councils. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 promotes more effective joint working, including the potential for Community Councils to exercise additional powers and responsibilities where appropriate. Similarly, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to work in a more integrated and collaborative way to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Partnership working with TCCs an important mechanism for delivering against these statutory duties.
- 3.3 Town and Community Councils are uniquely positioned to support the delivery of the priorities outlined in Vale 2030. As democratically elected bodies operating at the most local level, they have an in-depth understanding of their communities, including local needs, assets, and challenges. This proximity enables them to identify emerging issues more quickly and to engage residents in ways that are often more accessible and responsive than larger Authorities can achieve alone.
- 3.4 As part of Vale 2030, the Council has also refreshed its Reshaping transformation portfolio, with a key strand focusing upon Strengthening Communities, whereby we seek to change

the way we work with our residents and communities to be more responsive to local needs and to tackle issues together in a new and more engaging way. As outlined above, in meeting the strategic aims of this programme, there is a significant emphasis upon local needs and collaboration, of which TCCs are uniquely placed to understand and support whilst working in partnership with the Council.

- 3.5 Vale 2030 also places a strong emphasis upon the need to work in partnership to meet its aspirations of “Strong Communities with a Bright Future” and reflects upon the key role the 26 TCCs play in supporting this vision as there is a need to consider local involvement in service design and delivery which supports residents in achieving their outcomes. The Plan includes a partnership statement, outlining its commitments to those working with us with the below most pertinently supporting the proposal to review ways of working;
- Providing opportunities for you to be involved in the decision-making process at different stages – and for your voice to be heard in what we do and the way we do it
 - Providing a range of opportunities for you to be represented on different committees and forums
 - Be responsive to your ideas and concerns, with easy and clear contact points in our departments and;
 - Forging new relationships and ways of working.
- 3.6 The first Charter between the Council and TCCs was first produced in 2009, and has subsequently been refreshed, with the latest version adopted in 2019. The charter outlines the responsibilities in all stakeholders in consideration of several principles including:
- Recognition
 - Governance
 - Involvement, Engagement and Consultation
 - Information and Communication
 - Joint working and Engagement
 - Land Use Planning
 - Well-being of Future Generations Act
 - Local Elections
- 3.7 There are several statutory support mechanisms that the Council must provide to TCCs; which are undertaken alongside a range of non-statutory activities in the spirit of partnership working and collaboration. Examples of statutory support provided include:
- Elections and democratic administration - The Vale of Glamorgan Council is responsible for running ordinary and by elections for town and Community Councils; providing electoral notices, nomination processes and counts; funding the administration of those elections. This responsibility remains even where Community Councils are uncontested or operate at very small scale.

- Standards framework and ethnical governance - The Vale must maintain a Standards Committee with jurisdiction over Town and Community Councillors (the involvement of a co-opted representative is local and not legislative practice), provide access to the Monitoring Officer for advice, investigations and reports, and administer the Code of Conduct regime.
- Consultation duties - The Council is legally required to consult TCCs on matters affecting their area, including but not limited to:
 - Planning applications and local development plan matters where they are statutory consultees. Their representations must be recorded and considered, though not necessarily followed.
 - Community boundary and electoral reviews; including engagement with Councils during Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales reviews.
 - Traffic regulation orders, rights of way and local environmental changes
 - Annual Budget - Supporting TCCs with setting a precept and collecting on their behalf.

3.8 Alongside these statutory duties, the Council engages TCCs in several other ways including:

- Placemaking – Several Town Councils work in partnership with the Council in developing Place Plans, which aims to improve public spaces by turning them into lively, welcoming areas that improve the quality of life for communities.
- Community Asset Transfers - whereby the Council transfers the management or ownership of a property asset to a community body, such as a TCC, with x completed in the last five years.
- Street Scene – the Council’s Neighbourhood Services Teams undertake community engagement with TCCs and other stakeholders to ensure a joint up approach in managing and enhancing areas within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Well-being Planning and Monitoring – TCCs are engaged when the Council is setting its Well-being objectives, with the most recent iteration being Vale 2030, and asked to provide their feedback surrounding performance as part of the Annual Self-Assessment process.
- Public Service Board – TCCs have a nominated represented on the Public Service’s Board, facilitated by the Council, where they can engage with partners from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS), Natural Resources Wales alongside other public bodies surrounding issues which impact upon well-being.

- Community Liaison Committee – the Council operates a Committee, consisting of representatives from the Council and TCCs which aims to discuss Local Government matters of mutual concern. The Committee is also attended by local representatives from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and South Wales Police.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

- 4.1 There are a range of factors that support the need for a review of ways of working with TCCs. Following feedback from several Councils, the regular liaison meeting between the Council's Monitoring Officer and Clerks whereby updates surrounding code of conduct and procedural issues has been reviewed with several changes made including:
- Increasing the meeting frequency from a six monthly to quarterly basis
 - Undertaking the meeting on a hybrid basis to allow in person attendance where possible
 - Opportunities for clerks to submit agenda items for discussion alongside the normal business of the meeting
 - Sharing of good practice surrounding governance and identification of opportunities for collaboration; and
 - Sharing of wider items of interest to the group such as the Council's Corporate Plan, Vale 2030, to provide wider strategic context.
- 4.2 A review has been undertaken of the Council's electoral arrangements by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru, with the order laid in March 2026. Alongside recommendations for the Principal Council, the Commission also identified several changes within Community Councils; which left these bodies facing a range of scenarios; including merging and ceasing to exist.
- 4.3 To support Clerks in implementing these changes, the Monitoring Officer held a session in February 2026 drawing on supporting materials from One Voice Wales, Welsh Government and Society of Local Council Clerks providing practical advice and guidance to support Clerks in preparation of the upcoming changes. In addition to this, the Monitoring Officer has further supported Clerks with other supporting materials (such as TUPE guidance) and signposted to upcoming webinars, alongside providing ad hoc support as needed throughout the reorganisation process, and will continue to do so on an on-going basis.
- 4.4 In March 2025, the Senedd published the findings of a cross-Committee review of Role, governance and accountability of the Community and Town Council sector. In this report, they identified 11 recommendations, and whilst all are of relevance, the below represent the most pertinent to working relationship between Councils and TCCs:
- Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government should work with Local Government to explore mechanisms to enable the Town and Community Council sector to access support from Local Authority monitoring officers and HR services

- Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government should support both tiers of Local Government to ensure a review of the model charter between principal and Page Community Councils can be undertaken.
- Recommendation 10: The Welsh Government should work with the WLGA and One Voice Wales to encourage local authorities to:
 - provide IT support to Town and Community Councils through service level agreements, and
 - share facilities for use by Town and Community Councils to hold hybrid meetings.

4.5 Due to the elections in the Senedd and the timing of the Committee's report, Welsh Government did not take these recommendations forward with immediacy. The Council awaits the new Programme for Government and Welsh Government updates to understand the next steps of this review and vision for the sector in Wales.

4.6 It is also important to consider that alongside the support provided by the Principal Council, TCCs are also supported by One Voice Wales, the principal national body for Community and Town Councils in Wales, who also have a series of Area Committees to which TCCs are invited to engage. They provide advice to Council's on a range of matters including governance, finance, service delivery, human resources, policy guidance and training courses, alongside specialist projects and their lobbying role to all levels of government in ensuring that the voice of the sector is heard.

4.7 The Council has operated a Community Liaison Committee for several years, consisting of a mixture of representatives from both the Council and TCCs, and meets 3-4 times per year to consider issues, alongside verbal updates from South Wales Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

4.8 The Committee's Terms of Reference are as below:

(1) To discuss Local Government matters of mutual concern in attendance with one representative, or nominated substitute, from each Town / Community Council, and from any other organisation considered appropriate.

(2) To refer, as appropriate, reports / recommendations to Cabinet.

N.B. Only Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council will have voting rights. However, if requested by Town and Community Councillors, a vote will be obtained from Town and Community Councillors as an indication of their views, which will be reported in the minutes and, if the Committee requests, included in any related report / recommendations referred to Cabinet.

4.9 The Committee is attended by 12 politically balanced Members from the Council, alongside a representative from each TCC. Councillor Rhiannon Birch acts as Chair of the Committee, with Councillor Mark Wilson acting as Vice-Chair and is intended to act as a space to collaborate on strategic issues affecting the County, rather than local queries.

4.10 TCCs are invited to submit topics to be considered by the Chair (via Democratic Services), but as part of the normal agenda planning arrangements, it is the Chair's responsibility as to decide upon items for inclusion upon the agenda.

- 4.11 Alongside these requests and the verbal updates shared by partner agencies (as outlined in section 4.7), the Committee also receives a range of presentations and items from the Council where they are seeking the views of residents. An overview of topics considered alongside standing items is available in Appendix C.
- 4.12 It is important to note that due to the change in membership of TCCs on a more frequent basis than Council, it can be a challenge in ensuring consistency, understanding and engagement with the Committee, which could have an impact upon the work of the Committee.
- 4.13 Members of the Committee, both Councillors and TCC representatives, have fed back that they do not feel the Committee is currently achieving its intended purpose, noting that there are a large number of updates with limited tangible recommendations for improvement, there is a power imbalance in terms of voting rights and agenda planning due to the constitutional nature of the Committee, and there is a desire to explore alternative ways of working outside of this kind of setting and to improve collaboration between all bodies.
- 4.14 At a regional One Voice Wales meeting, representatives from an assortment of rural TCCs shared there had been collective discussions around the effectiveness of ways of working with the Principal Council, including the role and function of the Council's Community Liaison Committee. Following this meeting, the group of TCCs shared their viewpoints with the Council to consider in reflecting upon improving ways of working.
- 4.15 The Council has also reviewed its Scrutiny arrangements, and a core principle of these changes is improving the voice in democratic processes. Members of Town and Community Councils are able to submit requests for consideration of agenda items, alongside speaking or making representations around items (in line with public participation principles) and also be involved within topic specific Task and Finish if invited by the Committee to be involved.
- 4.16 In considering the factors identified within the report, it feels prevalent to undertake a review of ways of working with TCCs, and to explore opportunities which will maximise engagement between all stakeholders in the spirit of collaboration. A proposed schedule for review is available in Appendix A, which highlights the steps to be considered to review ways of working and to formally cease operating existing Community Liaison Committee arrangements and implementation of a forum model, which seeks to create a less formal space for bodies to network, collaborate and share good practice in achieving mutually beneficial outcomes for residents.
- 4.17 In order to enable the implementation of this plan, Cabinet are asked to endorse for the Community Liaison Committee to consider, and subsequently disseminate with TCCs, who will then be afforded a period to discuss with their Councils ahead of a proposed session (Appendix B) being undertaken in October 2026, which will aim to explore how we can work better together in the long term.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

- 5.1 A range of evidence has been used to inform this report, including the views of TCCs as outlined above and from Council Members.
- 5.2 Alongside this, there has been learning from Welsh Government Local Government Division, Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales in sharing what good practice looks like and what the opportunities are within the sector.
- 5.3 The Council has also explored and sought to understand how other Welsh Local Authorities engage with TCCs, and from a desktop research exercise, it is clear to see that there is a varied landscape across Wales, with some bodies working together to review their Charters recently, whilst others have not for several years. In addition to this, there are variety of engagement mechanisms in existing, including Committees and Forums alongside no formal engagement channel. The variation allows for local choice based upon the area's individual footprints and needs; and allows for flexibility in approach.

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

- 6.1 If approved, the report will be shared with members of Community Liaison Committee and wider Town and Community Councils to provide their views ahead of implementation.

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

- 7.1 A key part of the Vale 2030 is the partnership statement, of which Town and Community Councils are a key partner, detailing how the Council will work with others to support residents in meeting their outcomes and the aspiration of building "Strong Communities with a Bright Future".

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

- 8.1 The proposals outlined form a longer-term view of how the Principal Council and Town and Community Councils, through a process of on-going involvement, could seek to collaborate in preventing future challenges arising, whilst integrating with existing workstreams as much as possible.

Resources

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 The proposals outlined will be delivered within the Principal Council's existing base budget, meaning no further revenue funding is required. However, as workstreams potentially develop in the future, additional funding may be required dependent upon scope. This will be responded to on a case-by-case basis as and when the need arises.

10.0 Workforce

- 10.1 There are no immediate impacts to the Principal Council's workforce; but as ways of working further develop, staff will need to understand and consider the impact upon their individual areas of responsibilities.
- 10.2 Clerks from Town and Community Councils will be further supported with advice and guidance required to support the review process and subsequent implementation.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

- 11.1 **Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? If not, why?** An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed because this report outlines a programme of activities in working more effectively with Town and Community Councils. As proposals develop, Equalities Impact Assessment(s) will be completed as appropriate.
- 11.2 This report considers how the Principal Council works with Town and Community Councils including but not limited to in meeting the duties of;
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 - Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

12.0 Key Contacts

- 12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

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| Lead Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk | Democratic Services Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk |
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Appendices

Appendix A – Plan to review Ways of Working

Appendix B – Initial Forum Plan

Appendix C – Overview of Topics Considered by Community Liaison Committee

Background Documents

[Vale of Glamorgan Council Constitution](#)

[Vale of Glamorgan Council: Final Recommendations, Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru](#)

[The County Borough of the Vale of Glamorgan \(Communities\) Order 2026, Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru](#)

[Role, Governance and Accountability of the Community and Town Council Sector, Senedd Cymru](#)

Memorandum of Understanding between Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales

Charter between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Community & Town Councils

Improving local authorities and town councils: guidance, Welsh Government

| Stage | Target Date | Status |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Engagement with Community Liaison Committee | 2 nd July 2026 | In Progress |
| TCCs to share report with respective Councils to identify representatives and consider how they feel a collaborative forum may work best in lieu of existing arrangements. | July – Sept 2026 | Not Started |
| Forum to be held (facilitated by VOG Council) to explore with TCC representatives' areas outlined in Appendix B. | 6 th October 2026 | Not Started |
| Report on findings from pilot forums to Community Liaison Committee including outcomes and steps. | 15 th October 2026 | Not Started |
| TCCs to share report with respective Councils to provide feedback from session. | October – November 2026 | Not Started |
| Forum to be held (facilitated by VOG Council) trialling new ways of working identified at previous session. | January 2026 | Not Started |
| Evaluation of effectiveness of previous pilots forums with TCCs and development of an indicative Forward Work Programme for 2027-28 municipal year (if in agreement of approach). | January 2026 | Not Started |
| If forum model successful, commence cessation of Community Liaison Committee via report to Full Council for constitutional updates and re-calculation of Council's political balance. | 8 th March 2026 | Not Started |

| Initial Forum Plan | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Date | 6 th October 2026 |
| Time | 6pm – 8pm |
| Location | Cosmeston Room, Civic Offices, Barry |
| Overview of Session | |
| Introductions and Welcome | Director of Corporate Resources |
| Roundtable 1: What is working well with existing arrangements? What requires improvement? | Group discussions with flipcharts etc |
| Roundtable 2: What does good look like in terms of a regular forum for TCCs and how do we collectively achieve this? What new ways of working are needed? <i>(Frequency, Chair, location, hybrid, voting, publicly available, reporting lines etc)</i> | Group discussions with flipcharts etc |
| Break | |
| Roundtable 3: What type of business should be considered collectively between TCCs and Council in a Forum and what are the other contact routes available, how can TCCs best engage with agendas effectively and what items could be considered at next forum? | Group discussions with flipcharts etc |
| Roundtable 4: Looking ahead to 2027 – Implementation and future proofing with New Members | Group discussions with flipcharts etc |
| Next steps and Close | Director of Corporate Resources |

Proposed Attendees:

| Vale of Glamorgan Council | Town and Community Councils |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Chair of Community Liaison Committee | Leader |
| Executive Leader | Mayor |
| Deputy Leader | One other representative per TCC |
| Group Leaders | One Voice Wales representatives |
| Director of Corporate Resources | Community Liaison Committee Members |
| Monitoring Officer | |
| Head of Democratic Services | |
| Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer | |
| Community Liaison Committee Members | |

| Date | Item(s) Considered |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 22nd January 2026 | Request for Consideration: Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council –Information on Local Development Plan |
| 16th October 2025 | Request for Consideration: Penarth Town Council – Primary Health Care Provision. Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru – Vale of Glamorgan Electoral Arrangements Review. Nomination of Representative from Community Councils for the Public Services Board. |
| 1st July 2025 | Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru – Vale of Glamorgan Electoral Arrangements Review Nomination of Representatives from Town and Community Councils for the Public Services Board. |
| 7th April 2025 | Local Bus Services in the Vale of Glamorgan. Play Sufficiency Assessment. |
| 30th January 2025 | Nomination of Representatives from Town and Community Councils for the Public Services Board. |
| 10th October 2024 | Local Bus Services in the Vale of Glamorgan. Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Annual Report Reshaping Programme: Strengthening Communities – A Response to Audit Wales Reports on Tackling Poverty and Third Sector Working Draft Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan 2025-30 Nomination of Representatives from Town and Community Councils for the Public Services Board. |
| 21st May 2024 | Vale of Glamorgan Community Review. |
| 18th April 2024 | Local Transport Provision. Reshaping: The Next Phase of Transformation |
| 18th January 2024 | Strengthening our Communities and Work to Tackle Poverty and the Current Cost of Living Crisis Nomination of Representative from Community Councils for the Strong Communities Fund Evaluation Panel |