

Meeting of:	Community Liaison Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 28 January 2020
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Town and Community Councils Charter Update
Purpose of Report:	To provide members of the Community Liaison Committee with an update on the process for adopting the new Charter between Town and Community Councils and the Vale of Glamorgan Council and a response in relation to the recommendation raised at the last Committee meeting regarding Planning Committee site visits.
Report Owner:	The Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Managing Director
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	No Elected Member consultation has been undertaken as this is a Vale of Glamorgan wide report. The Charter has been developed by a working group of elected Town and Community Council Members and staff.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an update on the development of the Charter with Town and Community Councils and the development of the Action Plan as a result of the adoption of the Charter. • To provide guidance in response to a request by the Committee in relation to the Vale's procedure for site visits.

Recommendation

1. That the Committee considers and notes the contents of the report in relation to the Charter between Town and Community Councils and the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the response to the recommendation made previously for more information regarding planning site visits.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To provide Committee with an update regarding approval and adoption of the Charter and a response regarding the recommendations relating to planning site visits.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Councils (TCCs) in the Vale of Glamorgan set out the way in which these organisations would work together in a Charter. Originally drafted in 2009 and revised in 2013, the Charter is based on a series of principles and commitments that describe how the organisations will work together in the interests of the communities we serve. The current Charter follows a model published by the Welsh Government.
- 1.2 Since the Working Group has met, an engagement event with TCCs has been held to develop an approach to progressing the Reshaping Services agenda. This has informed the final version of the Charter which has been endorsed by the Committee and subsequently endorsed by Cabinet on 4th November 2019. The final version has also been informed by feedback from previous Committee meetings, and more widely, from TCCs across the Vale of Glamorgan.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Following approval of the revised Charter by the Community Liaison Committee and Cabinet all TCCs have been forwarded a copy of the document for formal adoption of the Charter. The Community Liaison Committee will be updated at future meetings as to the date when each TCC will have adopted the Charter.
- 2.2 The Charter Working Group was scheduled to meet on 22nd January 2020 to discuss the generation of an Action Plan to implement the principles within the newly adopted Charter and the Democratic Services Officer will provide a verbal update following the Working Group meeting at the Community Liaison Committee on the 28th.
- 2.3 At the last meeting of the Committee on 8th October, 2019, Councillor D. Reed from Llangan, a member of the Working Group, advised that during the Group's discussions on the Charter a suggestion that TCCs be given the opportunity to speak at site visits had been discussed, however this had not been agreed as site visits were arranged for Vale of Glamorgan Council Elected Members to view the sites with no discussion on applications taking place.

- 2.4** However, the background in relation to this process was requested, with the officer advising that they would seek advice and report back.
- 2.5** Following advice from the Operational Manager for Planning Services it is noted that representatives of TCCs are entitled to attend meetings of the Planning Committee to hear proceedings. Representation can be made in writing or directly to any Councillor before the meeting, and there is also a provision for public speaking at the meeting itself subject to prior registration. There is no legal obligation to allow public speaking at Planning Committee but in the interest of openness and transparency the Vale of Glamorgan Council has introduced this provision and it is working well.
- 2.6** Where an application is to be considered by the Planning Committee, a written report is produced which is available for inspection four working days before the date of the meeting. Additional representations may be received after the report is written up to midday the day before the meeting.
- 2.7** Site visits are often held on the day of the Planning Committee meeting and TCCs are invited to attend to observe it is important to note that a site visit is not a formal or public meeting. The purpose of the site visit is to allow Members of the Planning Committee (i.e. the decision makers) to view development proposals in context prior to a decision being made at the Planning Committee. Members are advised at the site visit not to discuss the merits of the application as the proper time for this is at the Planning Committee when all Members are present and after any additional representations have been made to the Committee.
- 2.8** Any Member of the public, TCC representatives or agents / applicants are advised not to address the Members at the site visit as not all Members of the Committee will be present, this should be done as part of the formal Committee process. The Planning Officer present will usually act as a 'go between' with the public and Members if anyone present wants Members to view a particular part of the site or surroundings this can be facilitated via the officer present.
- 2.9** Allowing public speaking at the site visit would be counterproductive to open and fair decision making, as it would only enable the Members at the site visit to hear these views and there are often less than half the Committee Members present at site visits. Having had an opportunity to speak at site visits would discourage individuals registering to speak at the Committee itself. It would also not be recorded and the Council could be exposed to legal challenge if the merits of the application were seen to be discussed and considered outside of the formal Planning Committee meeting where the decision is properly made.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The work of the Community Liaison Committee through the Charter between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and TCCs is consistent with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015). The way the Councils work together is an important facet of the Council's Reshaping Services Programme and contributes to the overall delivery of the Corporate Plan. The Charter proposes a specific principle relating to the Well-being of Future

Generations Act which seeks to ensure the duty and spirit of the Act are furthered as the Councils work together.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. The Charter sets out the context and processes involved in making decisions relating to service delivery and resources.

Employment

- 4.2** There are no direct resource implications associated with this report. The Charter sets out the context and processes involved in making decisions relating to service delivery and resources.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** There are no specific legal (including equalities) implications associated with this report.

5. Background Papers

Town and Community Councils Charter, Community Liaison Committee, 8th October 2019

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes, agendas and reports/agendas/community liaison/2019/19-10-08.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/agendas/community_liaison/2019/19-10-08.aspx)

Town and Community Councils Charter, Community Liaison Committee, 29th January 2019

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Community%20 Liaison/2019/19-01-29/TCC-Charter.pdf](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Community%20Liaison/2019/19-01-29/TCC-Charter.pdf)

Town and Community Councils Charter, Community Liaison Committee, 17th October 2018

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes, agendas and reports/reports/community liaison/2018/18-10-17/TCCs-Charter.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/reports/community_liaison/2018/18-10-17/TCCs-Charter.aspx)

Outline Findings and Recommendations, Independent Review Panel on Town and Community Councils

<https://gov.wales/docs/dsilg/publications/localgov/180807-independent-review-panel-en.pdf>