Agenda Item No: 7

Meeting of:	**Community Liaison Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**Thursday, 26 November 2026**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	**No Relevant Scrutiny Committee**
Urgent Decision Procedure Used **(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 - Update
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 provide an update to Community Liaison Committee following a workshop held on Tuesday 6th October between representatives of Town and Community Councils and Vale of Glamorgan Council, which aimed to explore how all stakeholders can build upon existing relationships alongside how these can be further improved.

1.2 The previous meeting of Community Liaison Committee (2nd July 2026) agreed the proposed approach, with an additional recommendation encompassing the principles of placemaking.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	**Reason for Recommendation – Why?**
2.1	T H A T Community Liaison Committee acknowledge the findings outlined within Section 4 of the report.	For awareness of the findings from the workshop session.
2.2	T H A T Community Liaison Committee members share the report with their respective Town and Community Councils for consideration and feedback to inform the ongoing review of ways of working.	To ensure all Councils can input into emerging changes around ways of working.

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.3	T H A T Community Liaison Committee agrees for work to commence exploring next steps as outlined within Section 4.20 of the report.	To continue with the continuous development work to improve ways of working between all involved stakeholders.
2.4	T H A T Community Liaison Committee provides feedback surrounding the Placemaking support offering outlined within Section 4.9 of the report.	To allow for a package of support to Town and Community Councils surrounding Placemaking to be further developed.

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 is an important mechanism for delivering against these statutory duties.

3.3 TCCs are uniquely positioned to support the delivery of the priorities outlined in the Vale of Glamorgan Council Corporate Plan; 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 aspiration 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;

3.5.1 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;

3.5.2 Providing a range of opportunities for you to be represented on different committees and forums;

3.5.3 Be responsive to your ideas and concerns, with easy and clear contact points in our departments; and

3.5.4 Forging new relationships and ways of working.

3.6 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, including elections and standards framework and ethnical governance and consultation duties.

3.7 Alongside these statutory duties, the Council engages TCCs in several other ways including, but not limited to, Placemaking, Community Asset Transfers, Street Scene and Public Services Board.

3.8 There are a range of practices and models across Wales as to how Principal Councils interact with TCCs, reflecting upon the diverse nature of the communities they serve and their distinct needs. As such, there is no uniform definition of what good looks like or is best practice, as this is dependent upon local characteristics such as their places, populations and politics for example.

3.9 As discussed at the previous meeting of Community Liaison Committee, there were several strategic drivers for reviewing the existing relationship, including:

3.9.1 Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru's review of electoral arrangements.

3.9.2 Senedd Committee's previous review of the sector (Role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector).

3.9.3 Vale of Glamorgan Council Performance Panel Assessment findings; and

3.9.4 Feedback received from TCC representatives.

3.10 Following discussion and consideration by the Committee, it was resolved and taken forward that:

(1) T H A T the proposal for reviewing ways of working with Town and Community Councils, as outlined in Appendix A to the report, be endorsed.
(2) T H A T the report as presented be shared with all Town and Community Council Clerks and One Voice Wales following the meeting.
(3) T H A T placemaking be agreed as a topic of focus for the first forum meeting in October 2026.
(4) T H A T Vale of Glamorgan Councillor Joanna Protheroe be invited to attend the first forum meeting in October 2026.

All of the above points have since been actioned.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 Following the previous meeting of the Committee, there have been several developments in how the Principal Council and TCCs are seeking to work together more collaboratively through greater co-production in addition to other areas of work already being undertaken between stakeholders.

Quarterly Clerk Meetings

4.2 The Council has continued in developing its approach towards the quarterly meetings held between the TCC Clerks and the Council's Monitoring Officer, with the last meeting held on Thursday, 3rd September 2026 exploring several thematic areas, with information distributed to all invitees, including:

4.2.1 Standards and Code of Conduct issues including Public Services Ombudsmen for Wales (PSOW) updates;

4.2.2 Implementation of Martyn's Law including practical guidance and support provided by the Emergency Planning team;

4.2.3 Further support in preparing for re-organisation following the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) review; and

4.2.4 Practical guidance for Member Safety and Well-being.

4.3 At this meeting following deliberation with Clerks, several key areas alongside the above were further identified including:

4.3.1 Opportunity to develop a rolling programme of pre-identified TCC Clerks to Chair the meetings, with agreement to host meetings in alternative locations with hybrid facilities available across the Vale of Glamorgan;

4.3.2 Agreement of a rolling forward work programme identifying key areas of future collaboration opportunities; and

4.3.3 Joint working opportunities in supporting Member Development and Induction in the run up to, and following the May 2027 local government elections, including the possibility of shared promotional activity around becoming a Councillor and the role of Councils.

Ways of Working Workshop with Town and Community Councils

4.4 The workshop session was held on Tuesday, 6th October 2026, which covered a range of topics.

4.5 Attendance at the workshop was positive, with a range of representatives (both Clerks and Councillors) from TCCs from across the Vale of Glamorgan being present, alongside Elected Members attending on behalf of the Council's Community Liaison Committee and Cabinet.

4.6 The workshop was designed to be open, inclusive and collaborative and review how all bodies can work together more effectively, through facilitated content.

Placemaking and Community Leadership

4.7 Members of the Council's Placemaking team initially led discussions at the Workshop, including providing an overview of the below content:

4.7.1 What is placemaking?

4.7.2 What are the principles?

4.7.3 What plans have been developed to date?

4.7.4 What are Placemaking plans for?

4.7.5 How can Town and Community Councils incorporate Placemaking into decision making?

4.7.6 How can the Placemaking team can help?

4.7.7 What the Placemaking team are unable to offer.

4.8 The key ethos shared during the presentation was that Placemaking was not just about having a Plan but incorporating the principles of placemaking, such as asset-based community development, within all stages of the governance and decision-making processes of TCCs including visioning, community engagement and decision-making.

4.9 Notably, there was provisional consideration of suggestions of how the embedding of Placemaking could be further supported by the Council's Placemaking team, including:

4.9.1 Council led surgeries held on a frequency to be determined;

4.9.2 Hosting online webinars providing practical advice, guidance and support;

4.9.3 Developing and utilising additional resources on the Placemaking's published information held on Participate Vale;

4.9.4 Producing a regular newsletter, sharing practice at both a regional and national level; and

4.9.5 Facilitating mentoring between TCCs who are at different maturities in their placemaking journeys.

4.10 There was also consideration of the depth of support available, with the Placemaking team transparently outlining that they are unable to offer one-to-one support or write plans for all TCCs individually, or to provide direct funding to facilitate this.

4.11 During discussions from Members, several discussion points were considered, including:

4.11.1 How to support communities such as Rhoose, who do not have a Community Council, to develop their approach to placemaking, to which it was noted that there was work with other community led organisations to enable change.

4.11.2 Approaches to developing a sense of place in the context of re-organisation, noting that some Community Councils which were being merged were currently distinct communities with different aspirations and needs.

4.11.3 The role of TCCs in producing evidence to support the Placemaking process and to demonstrate need; to which it was shared that good practice guidance would be shared; and

4.11.4 How to best approach placemaking in the context of being a tourist led economy, where the sense of place and community needs fluctuate based upon visitor experiences and periods of seasonality.

What works and what needs to change?

4.12 Workshop participants were asked to consider what was working well in terms of relations between TCCs and the Principal Council and to reflect upon the effectiveness of existing arrangements, alongside considering what they felt were the key areas to focus change upon.

4.13 During discussions, there were a range of reflections upon existing relationships, with key themes emerging including:

4.13.1 The positive role of the Town and Community Charter in developing relationships, and emerging joint prioritisation supported by the principles of Placemaking.

4.13.2 The need to future proof arrangements as collaboration will become more frequent due to the everchanging policy context and financial challenges, alongside the

wider focus upon community building.

4.13.3 The role of Twin-hatted Councillors in acting as a conduit and feedback loop to information surrounding the work of the Council, and how they could best be supported to try and encourage uniformity in approach.

4.13.4 Significant reflection upon the diverse nature of the Vale of Glamorgan area, considering the various areas served, with rural identities being significantly different to those in urban areas.

4.13.5 The role of Clerks in acting as key individuals in horizon scanning and sharing information surrounding decision making at a Council level which may impact upon their area.

4.13.6 There was felt to be a variability upon the level and nature of engagement undertaken by all stakeholders dependent upon the size of the TCC.

4.13.7 Varied views surrounding the effectiveness of the existing Community Liaison Committee as a vehicle for collaboration between the sectors, with some identifying the process for agenda setting being cumbersome and voting rights being unequal and not allowing parity of voice between TCCs and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. In addition, the 'Committee' architecture of the meeting being highly formalised whilst being publicly broadcast has been cited as a barrier to effective participation.

4.13.8 The desire for more informal and frequent dialogue between TCCs and Vale of Glamorgan Council surrounding decision making and, where practicable, on an earlier basis, to allow time for TCCs to disseminate information and engage accordingly at their local levels.

4.13.9 TCCs have an extensive knowledge of the communities they serve and have unique distinct strengths that they could use as a vehicle for developing engagement arrangements beyond existing passive arrangements; and

4.13.10 Some participants also felt that Community Councils are already experiencing significant change due to the boundary review, and it may be better place to pause this work to allow for new arrangements to be embedded.

Principles of future arrangements

4.14 Workshop participants were asked to consider what future ways of working would look like to improve the relationships between all stakeholders, with reflection upon several key areas including any potential future arrangements and ways of working.

4.15 During discussions, a range of key areas were identified, including:

4.15.1 Consistent feedback from most workshop groups surrounded the want to establish a directory of key contacts for the Council's various areas of responsibility, as

there were several challenges including contact details or personnel changes (both by Council and TCCs), a reliance on legacy knowledge and challenges in identifying the correct and most up to date information.

It should be noted that this challenge is not exclusive to TCC representatives and the Council is currently reviewing its Officer and Member Protocol as the same challenge exists.

4.15.2 The ask for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to further undertake its convening role in bringing stakeholders together, including consideration as to the role of the wider public service partners within this space, on an increasing basis.

4.15.3 The need for any future arrangements maintaining a route to decision makers within the Vale of Glamorgan Council; with some feeling repositioning as a Forum potentially deformalising this. There are varying viewpoints surrounding the public nature of sessions, which in turn improves transparency and public knowledge of work being undertaken, but also by design, creates different dynamics which are not always conducive to effective collaboration.

4.15.4 There was also consideration in terms of any meetings if they could be held in various locations across the county, or a hybrid basis, with Chairs on a rotational basis.

4.15.5 Clear agendas which should be co-produced, alongside a strategic forward work programme which responds to both county wide issues and emerging area-based challenges, which could be developed in collaboration.

4.15.6 There was felt to be a need to better involve Clerks within this work, albeit noting their varying working arrangements, as they often act as a consistent anchor for their Councils and are a key point of contact between TCCs and the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and to consider how wider representatives are aware of the work being undertaken to support them, as outlined within Sections 4.4 to 4.6 of this report.

Proposed Models for future arrangements

4.16 A range of views of potential future delivery models have been established following discussions including:

4.16.1 Continue operation of Community Liaison Committee in its current format; with a review of the terms of reference, attendees, agenda setting and voting rights to address outlined concerns surrounding participation and effectiveness. Minutes could also be published and shared with Cabinet as appropriate.

4.16.2 Facilitation of thematic quarterly workshops with the Vale of Glamorgan Council playing a convening role, bringing together a range of representatives of TCCs and Vale of Glamorgan Council to discuss collective challenges and issues, and share information as appropriate on a more informal and local basis.

4.16.3 There should be consideration in reflection of any of the above arrangements that they are considered in a means which complements and does not seek to duplicate or interfere with arrangements TCCs have with One Voice Wales, their representational body on a local, regional or national basis.

Post Workshop Feedback

4.17 Following the session, Members were asked to provide feedback surrounding the session. Several attendees have individually contacted and outlined that they believed the workshop to be a good opportunity with positive outcomes.

4.18 An online survey was also shared with attendees with findings, with most respondents indicating that they felt the communication ahead of the session, facilities, timing, resources and materials and discussion topics were “Good” or “Very Good”.

Next Steps

4.19 During the workshop, there was a collective agreement around the need for change, with a range of views as to what change would look like based upon individual experiences, as outlined within this report.

4.20 It is proposed that a further workshop session is convened in January (date to be confirmed), with focus upon:

4.20.1 A Model for the Future - reflecting upon the options outlined within section 4.16 on the report to commence drafting of Terms of Reference.

4.20.2 Exploring the mechanics of ways of working.

4.20.3 Developing a provisional Draft Forward Work Programme for any future arrangements.

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

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 during the workshop discussions.

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 a 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 the Community Liaison Committee and wider TCCs to provide their views ahead of the provisional January workshop session.

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 TCCs 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 TCCs, through a process of ongoing 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 TCCs will be further supported with advice and guidance required to support the review process and subsequent implementation.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed because this report outlines a programme of activities in working more effectively with TCCs. As proposals develop, Equalities Impact Assessment(s) will be completed as appropriate.

This report considers how the Principal Council works with TCCs including but not limited to meeting the duties of Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the 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?

Lead Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jlangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446709457	Democratic Services Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jlangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446709457

Appendix

None

Background Documents

Review of Ways of Working with Town and Community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan, Community Liaison Committee, Thursday 2nd July 2026

Vale of Glamorgan Council: Final Recommendations, Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru

Role, Governance and Accountability of the Community and Town Council Sector, Senedd Cymru

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