

Charter between the City and County of Swansea (CCS) and Community / Town Councils (C/TC) within its Boundaries

The Charter – 27 August 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The City and County of Swansea (CCS) and the Community / Town Councils (C/TC) within its boundaries have agreed to enter into a Charter which sets out the way in which we aim to work together for the benefit of local communities whilst recognising our respective responsibilities as statutory bodies.
- 1.2 The Charter is designed to build on and embrace the shared principles of openness, respect for each other's opinions, honesty and our common priority of putting citizens at the centre. This Charter is based on equality of partnership.
- 1.3 The Partners to the Charter shall be all or any of the Councils set out below who have signed the Charter.

Principal Council	City and County of Swansea
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Community Councils	
Bishopston	Mumbles
Clydach	Penllergaer
Gowerton	Pennard
Grovesend	Penrice
Ilston	Pontlliw & Tircoed
Killay	Port Eynon
Llangennith, Llanmadoc & Cheriton	Reynoldston
Llangyfelach	Rhossili
Llanrhidian Higher	Three Crosses
Llanrhidian Lower	Upper Killay
Mawr	

Town Councils	
Gorseinon	Pontarddulais
Llwchwr	

2. Amendments to the Charter

- 2.1 Further developments of this Charter will be discussed as required by the Community / Town Councils Charter Task and Finish Group and forwarded to the appropriate bodies for consideration and the Charter updated as required.

3. Local Governance (LG)

- 3.1 The Partners will be clear about the expectations that they have of each other in order to facilitate a smooth working relationship. In this regard, they will define the way in which they interact with each other. They will be clear about the role of councillors at all levels in the relationship and in community leadership.
- 3.2 There will be a Community / Town Councils Forum which shall meet as required but not less than twice per annum. It will be Chaired by the CCS Cabinet Member that has Community / Town Councils within their Cabinet Portfolio. The Forum will be supported by the Democratic Services (Committees) Team.
- 3.3 The overarching purpose of the Forum is to discuss local government matters of mutual concern. The Forum provides comments and seeks to make recommendations to the appropriate decision making body.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LG1	Will facilitate the Community / Town Councils Forum on a quarterly basis. Meetings will be held in the Civic Centre or Guildhall.	Will contribute towards the agenda of Forum meetings and contribute proactively to the attendance and discussion.
LG2	Will ensure that copies of presentations will be circulated.	Will ensure that copies of presentations will be circulated.

3.4 Representatives on the Community / Town Councils Forum

3.5 City and County of Swansea Council Representatives

- 3.6 The CCS shall nominate its own Councillor Representatives together with the Chief Executive and / or Officers acting on his behalf as required.

- 3.7 **Appendix A** outlines the Contact details for the City and County of Swansea.

3.8 Community / Town Council Representatives

- 3.9 The Clerk of the C/T Council together with two representatives from each Community / Town Council within the City and County of Swansea. Community / Town Councils shall nominate their own representatives.

- 3.10 **Appendix B** outlines the Contact details for the Clerks of the Community / Town Councils.

4. Consultation (CO)

- 4.1 The Partners recognise the importance of meaningful consultation and have a genuine commitment to consult on matters of mutual concern. They will agree clear, specific and time limited procedures and processes for consultation.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
CO1	<p>Will aim to give C/TC the opportunity to comment before making a decision that affects non routine and / or significant matters within their local community.</p> <p>In furtherance of this, the CCS will make available a copy of its public reports to Cabinet, Panels, Committees etc; Will advise all C/TC Clerks of the dates of its public meetings; and make copies of its agendas available on the Councils website as soon as possible.</p>	<p>C/TC will respond to consultation opportunities in a timely manner, addressing the key issues in the consultation document.</p> <p>Will make full use of the papers available to them to inform local decision-making.</p>
CO2	<p>Officers of CCS will attend meetings with C/TC (or groups of Councils) at a mutually agreed time to discuss matters of common interest when requested to do so and given sufficient notice.</p>	<p>CCS Councillors and Officers will be given an opportunity to speak at Community and Town Council meetings on matters of mutual interest.</p>
CO3	<p>CCS Scrutiny Committee(s) to liaise with C/TC on relevant local issues.</p>	<p>Will respond to requests from Scrutiny Committee(s).</p>

5. Information and Communication (IC)

- 5.1 The need for timely, clear, relevant information and communication in fostering good relationships and better joint working for the benefit of local people.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
IC1	<p>Will provide a contact point(s) within each Directorate for the Clerk of the Community / Town Councils to liaise with.</p>	<p>The Clerk of each of the C/TC shall be the contact point for CCS.</p> <p>The Chair of the C/TC shall act as Deputy SPOC but only in the absence of the Clerk and following a notification from the Clerk to that effect prior to the period of absence.</p>

IC2	CCS prefers to be contacted by the Clerk electronically but accepts all means of communication.	Acknowledges that CCS prefers to be contacted electronically but notes that it accepts all means of communication.
IC3	Will reply to communication from Clerks within 10 working days.	Will reply to communication from CCS within 20 working days.
IC4	No acknowledgement letter will be provided if a response can be provided within 10 working days.	No acknowledgement letter will be provided if a response can be provided within 10 working days.
IC5	If this is not possible, an acknowledgment will be sent within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will outline the timescale that the response will be given within and may be electronic or in writing.	If this is not possible, an acknowledgment will be sent within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will outline the timescale that the response will be given within and may be electronic or in writing.
IC6	Will inform the Clerk of non-routine and / or significant matters affecting their locality providing it impacts on the community. Will also consider any requests from a Clerk seeking specific information on general Council matters.	Will inform the CCS contact point(s) of any non-routine and / or significant matters affecting their locality providing it impacts on the community. The CCS contact point(s) would then draw it to the attention of the relevant Directorate.
IC7	CCS and C/TC will work jointly to implement the Welsh Government's e-government initiative in the interests of sustainability and the better delivery of public services.	CCS and C/TC will work jointly to implement the Welsh Government's e-government initiative in the interests of sustainability and the better delivery of public services.

6. Joint Working and Engagement (JW)

- 6.1 The Charter is intended to encourage working together towards a common set of goals, based on equality in terms of ownership, decision-making and recognition of each party's distinctive contribution.
- 6.2 It is recognised that an equal and effective partnership brings benefits and responsibilities to all those involved. Local Government at both tiers must work together to promote the wellbeing and economic, social, environmental wellbeing of the residents of our area. If doing things differently achieves a better service, we will seriously examine these methods.
- 6.3 Issues that are passed to CCS from C/T Councils will be shared with all CCS Councillors within the area of the C/T Council. This may on occasion lead to a joint meeting between CCS, Local Councillors and representatives from C/T Councils.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
JW1	Will provide opportunities for Clerks of Community / Town Councils to meet to discuss common concerns	Will encourage participation by Clerks in opportunities to network and share common concerns.
JW2	Will be clear about how devolved services can be discussed and agreed.	Will use the agreed procedures if there is a wish to progress devolved services.
JW3	Will give due consideration to devolving services that would provide better value for money and/or enhanced services.	Will be clear about how any devolvement of services will provide better value for money and/or enhanced services.
JW4	Will expect accountability for all C/TC acquired activities from CCS.	Will take responsibility for aspects of joint working that are signed up to.

7. Land Use Planning (LU)

7.1 Community and Town Councils (C/TC) know and understand their local area and must be able to comment effectively on planning matters. The CCS is able to take an overview of the needs of the whole local area and make decisions, taking local views into account.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LU1	Will uphold its statutory duty to consult C/TC on all planning applications in their communities.	Make appropriate responses to CCS recognising the parameters imposed by planning law and agreed planning policy.
LU2	CCS encourages C/TC to accept consultations via e-mail, to inspect plans online and respond via a password protected web facility.	Where appropriate C/TC will accept consultations via e-mail; will inspect plans online and respond via a password protected web facility.
LU3	Ensure that Councillors receive training on planning issues and have a sound understanding of how planning law works.	Ensure that Councillors receive training on planning issues and have a sound understanding of how planning law works.
LU4	Inform a C/TC in writing for the decision made with respect to a planning application in its area within 7 working days of the decision being made, and, if necessary explain why the decision is different from the point of view put forward by the C/TC.	Maintain an objective and professional approach to planning matters at all times.

LU5	Give C/TC information about relevant Development Management and Control (Planning) Committee meetings so that they may attend as observers.	Councillors to take up the opportunity to attend Development Management and Control (Planning) Committee meetings at the CCS.
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8. Practical Support (PS)

8.1 In order to be effective, elected members and officers must be well-trained and have the support they need to carry out their roles.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
PS1	The CCS will, where practical, offer C/TC access to support services, to enable them to take advantage of facilities such as printing, IT, purchasing at a mutually agreed price.	Will follow procedures set out to access CCS support services, but also have opportunity to make own arrangements.

9. Expertise (EX)

9.1 The Partners encourage continuous development of Officers and Councillors in both CCS and C/TC, either in their individual groupings or together. Improved expertise leads to professionalism and more effective joint working.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
EX1	Will offer Councillor induction training to C/T Councillors to enable them to understand the role and function of the CCS.	Will provide an induction to newly elected Councillors to enable them to undertake their role effectively.

10. Ethics (ET)

10.1 The Partners will provide an ethical service to local people, following the appropriate Standards and Codes of Conduct. They will encourage links between C/TC Clerks and the CCS Standards Committee.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
ET1	The CCS will, through the Monitoring Officer (MO), support C/TC in the timely consideration and provision of advice in relation to the application of the Councillors Code of Conduct.	C/T Councillors shall not make vexatious complaints under the Code and will provide all such information as required by the MO to enable MO to carry out function effectively.

11. Delegating Responsibility for Service Provision (DR)

- 11.1 Services should be delivered in the most appropriate manner, with regard to value for money and added value for local people.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
DR1	The CCS will consider all reasonably argued cases for the delegation of service delivery to C/TC, basing its consideration primarily on the improvement of service delivery for citizens whilst ensuring value for money is retained or enhanced.	C/TC will recognise that there are certain instances where it is not appropriate or desirable for the CCS to delegate service delivery.
DR2	Where it is not appropriate or desirable to delegate service delivery, the CCS will seek ways in which local information from communities might be used to enhance service delivery to better meet citizen needs.	C/TC will engage with citizens in their communities to understand their needs and convey them in a coherent and constructive manner to the CCS, such that they can be taken account of in service design and delivery.

12. Sustainability (SU)

- 12.1 The Partners will work in ways that are sustainable, reconciling the long-term needs with those of the present and protecting and improving the quality of life of current generations without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
SU1	Will assist C/TC with information on sustainable practices.	Will proactively assess the sustainability of current practices and processes.
SU2	Will outline how the CCS is actively pursuing sustainable development.	Will investigate projects which contribute to sustainability where beneficial to the community.

13. Single Integrated Plan (SP)

- 13.1 The Partners recognise the strategic importance of the Single Integrated Plan as the overarching strategic vision and priorities for the local area. Furthermore, they recognise that the Single Integrated Plan will only be fully effective if it is informed by the grass roots experiences from within communities.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
SP1	<p>The C/TC Forum shall nominate a Community / Town Councillor (who is not also a CCS Councillor) from its membership to sit on the Swansea Local Service Board (SLSB) in recognition of the local knowledge and experience this will bring.</p> <p>The Swansea Local Service Board (SLSB) shall determine whether or not to add the C/T Councillor to its membership.</p>	<p>The Community / Town Councillor representing the C/TC's shall feedback to the C/TC Forum on a 6 monthly basis. This C/T Councillor shall:</p> <p>1) Proactively represent the sector, raising matters of general concern appropriate to the agenda of the SLSB.</p> <p>2) Report back on a 6 monthly basis to the C/TC Forum in order to update on the work of the SLSB.</p>
SP2	Will involve C/TC in the development of the Single Integrated Plan.	Will contribute to the development of the Single Integrated Plan in its development stage.
SP3	Will involve C/TC in the implementation of the Single Integrated Plan.	Will respond actively and fully to consultation of the draft Single Integrated Plan and participate in monitoring the implementation of the Single Integrated Plan.

14. Local Elections (LE)

14.1 Fair and open elections are the bedrock of local democracy. The Partners will ensure that elections are freely and fairly contested, and encourage local people to become involved in local democracy.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LE1	CCS will always consult C/TC in CCS driven electoral reviews affecting their area.	Will encourage participation in the local election process by members of the local community.
LE2	Will involve C/TC in any awareness raising / publicity to encourage nominations for candidacy at local elections.	Will ensure wide publicity of vacancies on C/TC to maximise community representation.
LE3	Will help to publicise forthcoming local elections on behalf of C/TC.	Will facilitate public participation at all relevant meetings of the C/TC and its Committees to encourage community involvement.
LE4	Will brief C/TC Clerks on the nomination process so that they are equipped to assist any potential candidates who come forward for local elections.	-

LE5	Will provide help and assistance with the local election legal and administrative processes and procedures.	-
LE6	For all out C/TC elections, CCS will recharge in the financial year following the election. CCS will advise C/TC of these election costs in advance of the need for a C/TC to set its precept.	C/TC will pay these recharges within the terms stated on the invoice.
LE7	For C/TC by-elections, CCS will recharge in that financial year (wherever possible).	C/TC will pay these recharges within the terms stated on the invoice.
LE8	-	C/TC acknowledge the requirement for them to inform the Monitoring Officer of all co-options. In addition to this, each May the C/TC shall inform CCS (Electoral Services) of the names of the membership of their Council.

15. Monitoring and Review (MR)

- 15.1 The Charter will be reviewed annually or more often if required. The Community / Town Councils Forum shall conduct this review.

	City & County of Swansea (CCS)	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
MR1	Will arrange for the Charter to be reviewed annually (January or February) by the C/TC Task and Finish Group.	Will actively contribute to the review of the Charter.

18. Conclusion

- 18.1 The undersigned City and County of Swansea (CCS) and Community / Town Councils (C/TC) are committed to the principles and statements with the charter, for the benefit of local people.
- 18.2 Any of the Partners to this Charter may withdraw having given 28 days prior written notice to the Chair of the C/TC Forum.