

# **POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES**

**19 FEBRUARY 2015**

### **SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL WARDS WITH AN EXISTING TOWN OR  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

### **MODEL CHARTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCILS IN THE NEATH PORT TALBOT AREA**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To seek authority from the Cabinet Board to enter into a Model Charter Agreement between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the participating Community and Town Councils in the Neath Port Talbot area.

#### **Background**

There are many example of positive and effective relations between unitary authorities and community and town councils in Wales. Many of these, however are ad hoc and rely on the personal drive and commitment of particular individuals. In a joint report drafted by the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and One Voice Wales, it has been recommended that formal agreements and communication protocols be discussed and agreed between unitary authorities and community and town councils to ensure clarity of expectations and an understanding of respective roles.

Various written agreements between some community and town councils and unitary authorities currently already exist in Wales. Some of these are called charters and they set out the way that the two tiers of government primarily exchange information and consult with each other.

Furthermore, there is evidence from England, where such agreements have been developing over a longer period of time, that local charters have assisted in regularising effective working practices and offer a process that all parties can have a say in and sign up to. The process of arriving at a charter is considered as important as the charter itself as it necessitates in depth consultation and negotiation.

To assist in the development of such agreements in Wales, a model charter has been compiled jointly by the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and One Voice Wales.

The Welsh model highlights certain aspects of working that are equally important to both unitary authorities and community and town councils. These include “recognition”, “consultation”, “information and communication”, “land use planning” and others.

The Welsh model is offered as a starting point for local discussion and can be amended to reflect local arrangements. The Welsh Government has powers to make the development of such charters a mandatory requirement, but, in the first instance hopes that such arrangements will be developed on a voluntary basis, obviating the need for future legislation.

### **Current Position**

On 22 October 2012, discussions started to take place between the Council and Community and Town Council representatives on how best to progress the development of a local Charter agreement.

There have been some minor changes made to the Model Charter to reflect local circumstances. In its current form, while there are some additional responsibilities to be borne by Town and Community Councils (e.g. formally reporting back to their individual councils in relation to forum meetings) the proposed Charter agreement reflects current practice and related administrative arrangements that are already in place between the two tiers of local government.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

A Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the Screening Assessment it has been determined that this Policy does not require a Full Equality Impact Assessment. There will likely be a minor positive impact in terms of equalities.

### **Financial Implications**

Stated above, the Model Charter reflects and codifies the current practice and administrative arrangements that are largely already in place between the two tiers of local government and no additional financial implications are expected to be incurred in implementing the agreement.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended as follows:-

- (a) that the Cabinet Board support and approved the adoption of the Model Charter Agreement.
- (b) that the Proper Officer be authorised to sign the Model Charter Agreement with those town and community councils who wish to participate in the initiative.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

To establish a Model Charter Agreement within the County Borough which will formally articulate the way the two tiers of government primarily exchange information and consult with each other.

## **List of Background Papers**

Model Charter Agreement between Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and Community/Town Councils in the Neath Port Talbot area.

## **Officer Contact**

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## COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

### MODEL CHARTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCILS IN THE NEATH PORT TALBOT AREA

#### (a) Implementation of Decision

The decision will be implemented after the three day call-in period.

(b)	Sustainability Appraisal	..	No Impact
	Community Plan Impacts	..	No Impact
	Economic Prosperity	..	No Impact
	Education & Lifelong Learning	..	No Impact
	Better Health & Wellbeing	..	Positive
	Environment & Transport	..	No Impact
	Crime & Disorder	..	No Impact

#### Other Impacts

	Welsh Language	..	No Impact
	Sustainable Development	..	Positive
	Equalities	..	No Impact
	Social Inclusion	..	No Impact

#### (c) Consultation

Initial and further consultations and discussions with all Community and Town Councils in the Neath Port Talbot area and Members of the Community Council Liaison Forum have taken place.