

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

The Charter – 27 August 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The City and County of Swansea (Swansea Council) 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. The Partners to the Charter are set out below.

Principal Council	City and County of Swansea
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Community Councils	
Bishopston	Mumbles
Clydach	Penllergaer
Gowerton	Pennard
Grovesend & Waungron	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 Review 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.
- 3.2 There will be a Community / Town Councils Forum. It will be Chaired by the Swansea Council 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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LG1	Will facilitate the Community / Town Councils Forum not less than twice per annum and contribute proactively towards the agenda and at the meetings.	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.
LG3	Swansea Council shall nominate its own Representatives.	The Clerk of the C/T Council and two representatives from each Community / Town Council.
LG4	Each Service Area will have a dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) as outlined at www.swansea.gov.uk/CTCSpocs	The dedicated Single Point of Contact will be the Clerk of the C/T Council. C/T Councils to inform Swansea Council of any change to Clerks.

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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
CO1	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.	C/TC will respond to consultation opportunities in a timely manner, addressing the key issues in the consultation document.

	Details of Council, Cabinet & Committee Agendas & Reports are available at www.swansea.gov.uk/democracy	
CO2	Officers of Swansea Council will liaise with and / or attend C/TC meetings to discuss matters of common interest when requested to do so and given sufficient notice at mutually agreed times.	Swansea Council will be given an opportunity to speak at Community and Town Council meetings on matters of mutual interest as invited.
CO3	Swansea Council Scrutiny Committee(s) to liaise with C/TC on relevant local issues.	Will respond to requests from Scrutiny Committee(s).

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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
IC1	Each Service Area will have a dedicated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) as outlined at www.swansea.gov.uk/CTCSpocs Clerks of the Community / Town Councils should liaise with these SPOC's as required.	The Clerk of each C/TC shall be the contact point for Swansea Council. 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.
IC2	Swansea Council prefers to be contacted by the Clerk electronically but accepts all means of communication.	Acknowledges that Swansea Council prefers to be contacted electronically but notes that it accepts all means of communication.
IC3	Will reply to communication from Clerks as appropriate but within 10 working days.	Will reply to communication from Swansea Council as appropriate but 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	If this is not possible, an acknowledgment will be sent within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will outline the timescale that the response

	given within and may be electronic or in writing.	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 Swansea Council contact point(s) of any non-routine and / or significant matters affecting their locality providing it impacts on the community. The Swansea Council contact point(s) would then draw it to the attention of the relevant Directorate.

6. Joint Working and Engagement (JW)

- 6.1 The Charter is intended to encourage working together based on equality in terms of ownership, decision-making and recognition of each party's distinctive contribution.
- 6.2 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 examine these methods.

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
JW1	Will provide opportunities for Clerks or Representatives 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 / maintained services.	Will be clear about how any devolvement of services will provide better value for money and/or enhanced / maintained services.

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. Swansea Council is able to take an overview of the needs of the whole local area and make decisions, taking local views into account. Meetings of the Planning Committee are open to the public to attend.

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LU1	Will uphold its statutory duty to consult C/TC on all planning applications in their communities.	Make responses to Swansea Council recognising the parameters imposed by planning law and agreed planning policy.
LU2	Swansea Council shall consult electronically. C/TC's may inspect plans online.	Where possible C/TC will respond to consultations electronically. C/TC's will inspect plans online.
LU3	Ensure that Swansea Councillors receive training on planning issues and have a sound understanding of how planning law works.	Ensure that C/TC Councillors receive training on planning issues and have a sound understanding of how planning law works. The C/TC Forum will contain an annual standing item on Planning in order to inform C/TC's of Planning Procedure / Legislative changes.
LU4	Will include C/TC on the weekly email list of decisions made. The Officer report may be accessed online and will provide an assessment of all comments received.	Maintain an objective and professional approach to planning matters at all times.

8. Practical Support (PS)

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

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
PS1	Swansea Council 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 Swansea Council support services, but also have opportunity to make own arrangements.

9. Training (TR)

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

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
TR1	Will offer Councillor Code of Conduct training to C/T Councillors and access to the Authority's training suite at a cost.	Will ensure that C/T Councillors receive the training and development required for 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 Swansea Council's Standards Committee.

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
ET1	Swansea Council's Monitoring Officer (MO) shall support C/TC's in relation to the application of the Councillors Code of Conduct.	C/T Councillors shall take advice from the MO, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and One Voice Wales in matters relating to the Code of Conduct.

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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
DR1	Swansea Council will consider all reasonable requests for the delegation of service delivery to C/TC.	C/TC may seek to make reasonable requests to Swansea Council for the delegation of service delivery.

12. Sustainability (SU)

- 12.1 The Partners will work in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015's Sustainable Development Principle. This means acting "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs..

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
SU1	Will apply the Sustainable Development Principle's 5 ways of working (Involvement, Integration, Long Term, Prevention & Collaboration) to maximise contribution to the national well-being goals.	Will apply the Sustainable Development Principle's 5 ways of working (Involvement, Integration, Long Term, Prevention & Collaboration) to maximise contribution to the national well-being goals.
SU2	Will provide an annual presentation to C/TC Forum on applying the Sustainable Development Principle.	Will strive to apply the Sustainable Development Principle.

13. Local Well-being Plan (LW)

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

	City & County of Swansea	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LW1	<p>The C/TC Forum shall nominate a Community / Town Councillor (who is not also a Swansea Councillor) from its membership to engage as an "Other Partner" in the work of the Swansea Public Service Board (PSB).</p> <p>Swansea PSB shall determine the manner in which it engages C/TC in the preparation, implementation and delivery of the work of the Board. The PSB will seek advice and otherwise involve C/TC in the ways and to the extent it considers appropriate.</p>	<p>The C/T Councillor representing the C/TC's shall feedback directly to the C/TC.</p> <p>This C/T Councillor shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Proactively represent the sector, raising matters of general concern appropriate to the agenda of the Swansea PSB. 2) Report back on an annual basis or sooner if required to the C/TC Forum in order to update on the work of the Swansea PSB.
LW2	Will consult C/TC in the development of the Assessment of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plan.	Will contribute to the Assessment of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plan.
LW3	Will engage C/TC in the implementation of the Local Well-being Plan.	Will (if subject to the duty in Section 40 (1) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 take all reasonable steps to meet the Local Well-being Objectives and participate in monitoring and reporting the

		<p>implementation of the Local Well-being Plan.</p> <p>Can voluntarily contribute to meeting the Local Well-being Objectives. All C/TC are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to meeting the Local Objectives, regardless of whether they are under a duty to do so.</p>
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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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
LE1	Swansea Council will always consult C/TC in Swansea Council 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 assist C/TC Clerks on the nomination process so that they are equipped to assist any potential candidates who come forward for local elections. Further information on the process may be viewed at www.swansea.gov.uk/elections	-
LE5	Will provide help and assistance with the local election legal and administrative processes and procedures.	-
LE6	For all out C/TC elections, Swansea Council will recharge in the financial year of the election.	C/TC will pay these recharges within the terms stated on the invoice.

	Swansea Council will advise C/TC of these election costs in advance of the need for a C/TC to set its precept.	
LE7	For C/TC by-elections, Swansea Council will recharge within 6 months to a year of the election.	C/TC will pay these recharges within the terms stated on the invoice.
LE8	-	Ensure the names of all C/T Councillors are published on their websites.

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	Community / Town Councils (C/TC)
MR1	Will arrange for the Charter to be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by the C/TC Charter Review Group.	Will actively contribute to the review of the Charter.

16. Conclusion

16.1 The undersigned City and County of Swansea and Community / Town Councils (C/TC) are committed to the principles and statements with the charter, for the benefit of local people.

16.2 Any of the Partners to this Charter may withdraw having given 28 days prior written notice to the Chair of the C/TC Forum.