

'A Shared Community'

Charter between Cardiff Council and Community Councils in Cardiff

Introduction

The six Community Councils of Lisvane; Old St Mellons; Pentyrch; Radyr & Morganstown; St Fagans and Tongwynlais and the County Council of the City & County of Cardiff (hereby referred to as 'Cardiff Council') have agreed to publish a Charter which sets out how we aim to work together for the benefit of local communities whilst recognising our respective responsibilities as autonomous, democratically elected statutory bodies.

The Charter is designed to build on existing good practice and embrace the shared principles of openness, respect for each other's opinions, honesty and our common priority of putting citizens at the centre. The Charter is based on equality of partnership and is not a top-down arrangement.

The Charter was originally adopted in March 2012 and has been updated and re-affirmed in xxx 2015.

Partners to the Charter

Unitary Authority

- Cardiff Council

Community Councils

- Lisvane Community Council
- Old St Mellons Community Council
- Pentyrch Community Council
- Radyr & Morganstown Community Council
- St Fagans Community Council
- Tongwynlais Community Council

Recognition

We accept the legitimacy and benefits of partnership working whilst at the same time recognising and respecting each other's roles. We aim to work together as a partnership of equals rather than tiers.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Acknowledges and recognises that community councils are the grass roots level of local government. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, community councils offer a means of engaging with local people, of decentralising the provision of certain services, and of revitalising local communities.	Recognise the strategic importance of Cardiff Council and the economy of scale and appropriate distribution of certain services they are able to achieve.
Recognise and respect the diversity of community councils and that their needs vary according to size, and the extent to which they participate varies.	Recognise that community councils come within the common umbrella of Cardiff Council.

Local Governance

We will be clear about the expectations that we have of each other in order to facilitate a smooth working relationship. In this regard, we will define the way in which we interact with each other. We will be clear about the role of councillors at all levels in the relationship and in community leadership.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will hold an annual liaison meeting with nominated representatives of community councils that wish to take part. Such meetings will be held at a location to be mutually agreed and which is convenient for all councils. These meetings will be known as Community Liaison Meetings.	Will contribute towards the agenda of liaison meetings and contribute proactively to the attendance and discussion.
Will nominate the Council's Monitoring Officer as the appropriate officer to act as a liaison between Cardiff Council and the community councils.	Will contact the nominated liaison officer(s) on the agreed issues and make them aware of any difficulties being encountered.
Will administer the holding of community council elections.	Will notify the need for community council elections in a timely manner.
	Will facilitate public participation at all relevant meetings of the community council and its committees to encourage community involvement.

Consultation

We appreciate the importance of meaningful consultation and set out a genuine commitment among all parties to consult on matters of mutual concern. We will agree clear, specific and time limited procedures and processes for consultation.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will aim to give community councils the opportunity to comment before making a decision that affects the local community (particularly on matters relating to planning and other environmental proposals).	Will respond to consultation opportunities in a timely manner, addressing the key issues in the consultation document, where applicable.
Will publish dates of public meetings and agendas & reports for Cabinet, Council and other Committee meetings on the Council's website as soon as possible.	Will make full use of the papers available to them to inform local decision-making.
Will, in accordance with existing protocols and subject to available resources, allow appropriate officers to attend meetings with community councils (or groups of community councils) at a mutually agreed time to discuss matters of common interest when requested to do so and given sufficient notice.	Will provide an opportunity for local county councillors/officers (as appropriate) from Cardiff Council to speak at community council meetings on matters of mutual interest.
Will encourage scrutiny committees to consult with community councils on relevant local issues.	Will respond to requests to input views to scrutiny committees.

Information and Communication

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

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will provide community council clerks with access to the Council's Member Enquiry telephone line, initially on a 6 month trial basis, to be extended by mutual agreement.	Will utilise the agreed contact systems and respond in the most appropriate and timely method.
Will communicate by providing appropriate consultation documents and other information electronically to community council clerks for distribution to community councillors.	Will ensure that all community councillors have access to the appropriate documents.

Joint Working and Engagement

The Charter defines 'partnership' as 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. 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 economic, social and environmental well being of our area. If doing things differently achieves a better service, we will seriously examine these methods.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will provide the opportunity for community council clerks to meet with the Monitoring Officer or an officer representative from Cardiff Council to discuss common concerns and resolve issues, at the specific request of the clerks.	Will encourage participation by community council clerks in opportunities to network and share common concerns.

Land Use Planning

Community councils know and understand their local area and must be able to comment effectively on planning matters. Cardiff Council is able to take an overview of the needs of the whole local area and make decisions, taking local views into account.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will reaffirm its statutory duty to consult community councils during the preparation of the Local Development Plan and also on related policy documents, including Supplementary Planning Guidance.	Will make appropriate responses to the Council, recognising the parameters imposed by planning law and national planning policy guidance.
Will reaffirm its statutory duty to consult community councils on all planning applications in, or directly affecting, their communities.	Will make appropriate responses to Cardiff Council recognising the parameters imposed by planning law and agreed planning policy.
Will inform a community council of any site visit by Planning Committee members relating to a planning application in its area.	Will offer community councillors training on planning issues to ensure that they have a sound understanding of how planning law works.
Will provide a community council with a copy of the final report relating to a planning decision in its area within seven days of the decision being made, if the community council has submitted written representations in relation to the planning application.	Will maintain an objective and professional approach to planning matters at all times.
Will provide community councils with details of relevant Planning Committee meetings so that community councillors may attend as observers.	Will encourage community councillors to take up the opportunity to attend meetings of Cardiff Council's Planning Committee as observers.
Will provide timely information to a community council about any planning appeals in its area.	

Practical Support

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

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will, where practical, offer community councils access to support services, to enable them to take advantage of facilities such as printing, IT and purchasing at the Council's agreed rate to recover costs.	Will follow established procedures to access support services from Cardiff Council, but will also have the opportunity to make their own arrangements.

Expertise

We will encourage continuous development of officers and members in both Cardiff Council and the community councils, either in their individual groupings or together. Improved expertise leads to professionalism and more effective joint working.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will offer member induction training to community councillors to enable them to understand the role and function of the unitary authority.	Will provide an induction to newly elected community councillors to enable them to undertake their role effectively.

Ethics

We will provide an ethical service to local people, following the appropriate standards and Codes of Conduct. We will encourage links between community council clerks and Cardiff Council's Standards & Ethics Committee.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will, through the appointed Monitoring Officer, support community councils in the timely consideration and provision of advice & training in relation to the application of the Member Code of Conduct.	Community councillors shall not make vexatious complaints under the Member Code of Conduct and will provide all such information as required by the Monitoring Officer to enable him/her to carry out his/her function effectively.

Financial Arrangements

Both Cardiff Council and the community councils recognise the need for clarity and transparency in financial arrangements. In developing and implementing financial arrangements, relevant national and local priorities will be taken into account.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will, in setting the level of council tax for the area, have regard to services being delivered by the Council as a whole.	Will, in setting the annual precept, have regard to local priorities and the services provided within the community by Cardiff Council.

Delegating Responsibility for Service Provision

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

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will, on a case-by-case basis and in line with any related policy or guidelines that may be developed by the Council, give due consideration to all reasonably argued formal requests for the delegation of responsibility for local service delivery to community councils, basing its consideration primarily on the improvement of service delivery for citizens whilst ensuring value for money is retained or enhanced.	Will recognise that there are certain instances where it is not appropriate or desirable for Cardiff Council to delegate service delivery.
Will, in the absence of formal delegation, seek ways in which local information from communities might be used to enhance service delivery to better meet the needs of citizens.	Will engage with citizens in the communities they serve to better understand their needs and convey these needs in a coherent and constructive manner to Cardiff Council, such that they can be taken account of in service design and delivery.

Sustainability

We 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.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will assist community councils by providing information on sustainability and related good practice.	Will proactively assess the sustainability of current practices and processes.
Will outline how Cardiff Council is actively pursuing sustainable development.	Will investigate projects which contribute to sustainability where beneficial to the community.
Will put in place a framework for compliance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and share good practice, information and opportunities for engagement with Community Councils with a view to working towards the well-being goals outlined in the Act.	Will contribute towards meeting the local objectives included in the local well-being plan prepared pursuant to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Single Integrated Plan - “What Matters”

We recognise the strategic importance of the “What Matters” Single Integrated Plan which establishes the overarching strategic vision and sets out the priorities for the local area. In Cardiff, these are set out within the 10 year Integrated Partnership Strategy – ‘What Matters’ – which incorporates the previous Community Strategy; the Children & Young People’s Plan; the Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Strategy and the Community Safety Strategic Assessment. Furthermore, we recognise that this will only be fully effective if it is informed by the grass roots experiences from within our communities.

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will, in recognition of their local knowledge and experience, invite a representative of community councils to sit on the Strategic Neighbourhood Partnership Group in their respective areas. This will provide invaluable input into the delivery of the Integrated Partnership Strategy and respective Neighbourhood Action Plans across the city.	Will together nominate a community councillor to be their representative on the Strategic Neighbourhood Partnership Group in their respective areas. This individual shall proactively represent the community council, raising matters of general concern appropriate to the agenda.

Will involve community councils in the agreement of the local priorities for the Neighbourhood Partnership teams and to develop / review the annual Neighbourhood Action Plans.	Will contribute to the agreement of the local priorities for the Neighbourhood Partnership teams and assist in developing / reviewing the annual Neighbourhood Action Plans.
Will involve community councils in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plans .	Will respond actively to assist in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plans .

Community Council Elections

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

Cardiff Council	Community Councils
Will involve community councils in the planning process for community council elections.	Will encourage participation by members of the local community in the community council election process
Will involve community councils in any awareness raising/publicity to encourage nominations for candidacy at community council elections.	Will ensure wide publicity of vacancies on community councils to maximise community representation.
Will help to publicise forthcoming community council elections on behalf of community councils.	Will publicly display statutory notices for forthcoming community council elections.
Will brief community council clerks on the nomination process so that they are equipped to assist any potential candidates who come forward for community council elections.	
Will provide help and assistance with the legal and administrative processes and procedures for community council elections.	

Monitoring and Review

The Charter will be reviewed at the annual Community Liaison Meeting or before if there is a need to do so. The Council's Monitoring Officer will be authorised to make any agreed minor amendments to the Charter. Cardiff Council's Standards & Ethics Committee will receive a report on any proposed substantive amendments to the Charter or ethical issues arising from the Community Liaison Meeting.

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Conclusion

Cardiff Council and the undersigned community councils are committed to the principles and statements within the Charter, for the benefit of local people.

Cardiff Council, Cabinet Member, Skills Safety and Engagement

Chair, Lisvane Community Council

Chair, Old St Mellons Community Council

Chair, Pentyrch Community Council

Chair, Radyr & Morganstown Community Council

Chair, St Fagans Community Council

Chair, Tongwynlais Community Council