RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S SHARED COMMUNITY CHARTER

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

and the

Town Councils of both Pontypridd and Pontyclun

and the

Community Councils

of

Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm, Rhigos, Hirwaun and Penderyn, Llantwit Fardre, Llantrisant, Llanharan, Llanharry, Tonyrefail, Gilfach Goch and

Taff's Well & Nantgarw have agreed to publish a Charter which sets out how we aim to work together for the benefit of the local communities.

INTRODUCTION

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and it's Town and Community Councils have agreed to publish this Charter which sets out how we collectively 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, to achieve the best possible outcomes for our residents and communities. This Charter is based on equal partnership and is not a top-down arrangement. It is a set of principles by which we will work together.

The Charter will form the basis for meaningful communication and liaison through the respective partners either individually or through collective meeting arrangements, at a Member and Officer level.

The Charter will use the sustainable development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to deliver on outcomes for the benefits of the people who live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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THE CHARTER

This Charter is developed with three main overarching aims, which all Members of the Charter recognise as benefiting the residents and visitors of Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- Strengthening partnership working & collaboration opportunities
- Enhancing local democracy
- Improving our communities and public service delivery.

OUR SHARED COMMITMENTS

These are our shared commitments that will help to achieve our aims.

RECOGNITION

We will:

- Recognise the benefits of partnership working whilst at the same time recognising and respecting each other's roles.
- Work together as a partnership of equals.
- Collaborate and involve each of the partners to ensure that all decisions taken forward are sustainable in the long term, whilst being mindful of the current needs of our residents.

COMMUNICATION

We will:

- Enhance how we listen and respond to one another. Availability and accessibility will be central to how we interact.
- Communicate openly and transparently, explaining processes and decision-making.
- Improve information and communication sharing to enable solutions and early interventions at the right time to make progress in achieving the well-being goals of the County Borough.

ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT

We will:

- Recognise the importance of meaningful engagement and involvement and set out a genuine commitment across all parties to consult on matters of mutual concern.
- Engage with one another at the earliest opportunity, recognising the diverse perspectives and challenges faced by various stakeholders and communities.
- Ensure that consultation and engagement processes are as accessible as possible.
- Strengthen the community involvement in the Consultation processes taken forward, to allow for valuable feedback to be provided on any proposals taken forward which impacts upon the wellbeing of the residents of the County Borough.
- Actively follow-up on consultations and feedback in an appropriate manner.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY / GOVERNANCE

We will

- Be clear about the role of Councillors at all levels in the relationship and community leadership taking forward cohesive communities across the County Borough and respect the democratic mandate of all councillors.
- Empower our residents and communities to participate in local democracy, including young people and underrepresented groups.
- Continue to place residents and communities at the heart of what we all do.
- Promote participation in local democracy.
- Direct Council resources to promote and encourage residents to stand for Community and Town Council elections.

RESOURCES

We will:

- Share relevant and appropriate information to empower each other to best support our residents and communities.
- Optimise access and signposting to resources and practical support, including training opportunities.
- Identify opportunities where resources and support can be effectively shared between councils to improve outcomes for residents.

ACHIEVING OUR COMMITMENTS

Regular and open engagement is key to the success of the continued positive working relationships between us. This will be delivered via regular liaison meetings through the following approach:

- **Community Clerk Engagement** –Quarterly liaison meetings at Clerk/Officer level.
- **Councillors** – At least twice a year a more formal meeting of partners will be held at TC/CC Chair or Leader and RCT Senior leadership level. This invite will also be extended to RCT's 'twin hatted' Members (County Borough and Community / Town Councillors).
- **Improved Communication** – RCTCBC will produce regular e-newsletters and sign-posting to participation in key decisions of the Council.
- **Dedicated support** – RCTCBC will continue to resource a dedicated Liaison Officer to support collaborative working between all parties
- **Providing Policy Advice & Guidance** – This Officer will also provide advice and guidance in respect of Local and National Policy.
- **Sharing and supporting Training & Development needs**. RCTCBC will enhance access to relevant member development and training opportunities. This will include providing access to Clerks to support their own professional development as well and occupational health and well-being support.

IMPLEMENTING THE CHARTER

The intention is that this charter remains a 'living' document and is written to allow each Council to adopt a position that better reflects their working rather than stipulated actions and procedures which will help promote joint working to allow all Councils to provide a better experience for those residents and visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

MONITORING & REVIEW.

The Charter will be fully reviewed every five years following elections or more often if there is a need to do so.

Delivery against the objectives contained will be reviewed annually by Clerks and Senior Democratic Services Officers.

The following additional Documents are available as addendums to the Charter:

- Job description of Liaison Officer.
- Good Practice Examples.
- Terms of Reference of Engagement Meetings.
- Delivery Plan.