

CTC 07

Ymgynghoriad ar rôl, llywodraethiant ac atebolrwydd y sector cynghorau tref a chymuned  
Consultation on the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council  
sector

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Cymuned Hirwaun a Phenderyn

Response from: Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council

Dear Sir/Madam

Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council would like to submit the following comments:

Variation in Governance:

We feel that the value of Community Council's is very much unrecognised by County Borough Councils. Despite us having a Charter agreement in place, the County Borough Council still does not respond to our queries. The Charter agreement is not working and we feel that they see us very much in contempt.

We as a small Community Council are facing problems due to Welsh Government's one size fits all approach to Local Government. We are a small Community Council with only one member of staff, our Clerk, who spends a disproportionate amount of time dealing with statutory requirements such as audit, annual report, environmental report etc at the detriment to the other work required for the community and for the Council. Welsh Government needs to recognise this and make adjustments to the benefit of small councils.

The level of governance has increased over the last 10 years to the point where it is seriously undermining the work for the community. One person alone cannot do the work that larger councils, with additional staff members, shares between a number of staff. The one size fits all approach doesn't work.

Digitilisation:

Welsh Government seems to think that the whole of Wales is digitally connected, which is not the case. Small Community Council's cannot meet the requirements due to this.

Ombudsman:

We continue to be disappointed with the general lack of response from the Ombudsman in respect of Cllrs behaviour. Because the Ombudsman doesn't investigate, Cllrs learn that their behaviour can continue as they get away with it. More should be done to stop this. The Chair has no authority to stop this behaviour.

Can the Monitoring Officer be given more powers to deal with this before it goes to the Ombudsman? The current process is not working and Cllrs behaviour is getting worse. Something needs to be done. We consider the value of our Clerks is greatly underestimated and the training to the high standards that they achieve shouldn't be jeopardised by the behaviour of Cllrs.

Why does the Standards Committee only operate after the Ombudsman? Why can't the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee deal with it in the first instance, with the more serious cases then being referred on to the Ombudsman. The current system is not working and needs to be changed.