

CTC 35

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: Fforwm Ieuenctid y Fro

Response from: Vale Youth Forum

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this enquiry.

The commitment of Welsh Government to consulting with and taking the views of young people into account are well evidenced in the work of the Welsh Youth Parliament and through the work of the Welsh Children's Commissioner.

However, that commitment at the top of government in Wales is not reflected in the situation which exists in local government at any level but particularly at the level of Town and Community Councils.

In these times of continued austerity and the cost of living crisis principal councils are devolving or transferring more and more services and facilities to town and Community Councils. It is the view of the Vale Youth Forum that these councils are poorly equipped to take the views of young people into account when making decisions which affect their lives.

We can find NO community Councils in the Vale of Glamorgan that have taken up the option to have young representatives to speak on behalf of young people. Those Town Councils which purport to do so either just pay lip service to the issue or have wholly unsatisfactory ways of selecting representatives.

Shortly, we believe, changes to local government boundaries will cause many community councils to merge, this is especially so in rural areas, making them even more remote from nay young people they may claim to represent. In rural areas, with longer distances to travel and an absence of public transport, it will be even more difficult for young people's views to be heard when decisions are to be made about them.

Our experience is that Town and Community Councils neither seek nor welcome the views of young people who live in their areas. The Children's Commissioner for Wales makes great efforts to promote the rights of young people yet the right for young people to be heard barely exists at Town and Community Council level.

Increasingly Town and Community Councils are taking on responsibility for running community facilities, playgrounds, recreation or community buildings. We believe that there should be a requirement on Town and Community Councils to put in place effective arrangements to seek the views of young people on matters which affect them. This could be done in many ways, effective relationships with local, voluntary youth groups, periodic consultation events which include young people, youth representatives or councils. It should be for communities to choose the method of consultation that suits them best. However, NO consultation with young people should not be an option.

The Vale Youth Forum believes that currently Town and Community Councils do not have the powers or responsibilities to effectively support young people in their communities. Community Councils especially are well placed to serve the interests of young people and future generations. They are close to the grass roots of their communities and have the best interests of their communities at heart. However, they need support and guidance if they are to take on responsibilities for services which affect young people.

We welcome the commitment of the Welsh Government to the wellbeing of future generations. Now this commitment needs to be extended to Town and Community Councils.

Thank You.

Conway Hawkins

Co-ordinator / Cydlynnydd