

CTC 38

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 Llandyfaelog

Response from: Llandyfaelog Community Council

Cyngor Cymuned Llandyfaelog Community Council

Cadeirydd/ Chairman: Nicola Jones

Clerc / Clerk: Arfon Davies

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18th October 2024

Local Government and Housing Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Annwyl/ Dear All

Inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector

I write enclosing a response from Llandyfaelog Community Council to your inquiry.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully



Arfon Davies
Clerc / Clerk

The role and value of community and town councils in Wales;

The role of Community and Town Council is to be the closest level of Local Government to residents, representing their views to County and County Borough Councils and Welsh Government.

To provide services to the Community of an appropriate level at an acceptable cost.

For the members of the Council to be residents of the Community and truly represent their area as members of that Community.

To be consulted on matters relevant to the Community and to report issues of relevance to the County Council for their attention (e.g. highways issues).

To promote the wellbeing of the Community, being a level of local government that truly understands the area.

A barrier to this is the lack of consistency across the sector on responsibilities depending on what the County Councils have looked to devolve or asset transfer, can lead to confusion across borders.

Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape;

Having Clerks that have the relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience is vital. CiLCA remains an important factor and its promotion should be supported. Clerk retention as a profession is important.

Training for Councillors is vital to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to support their role. Attracting Councillors can be a challenge for some areas.

The support provided by One Voice Wales is key to ensuring this remains the case.

Governance and scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency;

Improvement to the timeliness of Audit Wales providing audit reports would support this matter.

Provision of Annual Reports by Council's is a step forward, but these are not well scrutinised outside of the Council.

Provision of websites provide for transparency in the Community, with the information being published supporting accountability and transparency.

Recent legislation mean that Council's must provide reports of Council meetings online within a week, again this is not well scrutinised to ensure this is happening.

Further development of the thematic audits by Wales Audit as part of the Annual Accounts returns as has been undertaken recently would be beneficial. This has been a positive move forward.

Councillors are given an opportunity to attend training on a frequent basis.

Scope of digital and new technology to improve decision-making, service provision and participation in local democratic processes;

The legislative change providing a requirement to implement access for members and the public via remote meetings is a positive step. However technological issues such as wifi, lack of mobile signal or IT provision provide challenges, especially in rural areas.

Other technological advances can support efficiency, but can provide difficulties in rural areas.

How new powers and responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities.

GPOC has been implemented in our Council, however the requirement to renew the power annually and the restrictions that have to be met in order to resolve the Council as Competent can be a barrier to maintaining this being in place.

Welsh Government investment and financial support to Community and Town Councils (along with further support to One Voice Wales) would enable further innovation of services and development of relationships with the 3rd and private sectors in order to improve service delivery.

The devolving of new responsibilities to Councils would unlikely be resisted, but should come with financial support either from Welsh Government or County Councils. Any expectation that a precept increase should cover this will cause difficulties in Communities.