



COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

Draft Response to the Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee Consultation

From: Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

Date: tbc

Reason for Report

Response to the Inquiry into the Role, Governance, and Accountability of Community and Town Councils in Wales

1. Introduction

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council is pleased to contribute to the consultation regarding the role, governance, and accountability of community and town councils in Wales. As a town council with a long-standing commitment to local service delivery and civic engagement, we recognise the importance of ensuring that the sector is fit for purpose and able to support our communities in an evolving local government landscape.

2. The Role and Value of Community and Town Councils

Our council plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life for residents by organising and facilitating a wide range of cultural, civic, and community activities throughout the year. These events are designed to foster community spirit, strengthen local identity, and ensure that residents feel a strong connection to their town.

Some key events and activities led by Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council include:

Christmas Lights Display: The council organises an annual festive lights display, which enhances the town's atmosphere and supports local businesses by attracting visitors to the town centre during the holiday season.

Summer Basket Displays: Each summer, the council arranges for the display of hanging flower baskets throughout the town, contributing to the town's aesthetics and promoting community pride.

May Day Celebrations: A traditional celebration, where the council facilitates local activities that reflect the town's heritage and provide entertainment for all ages.

Remembrance Sunday and Civic Sunday Events: The council takes a leading role in organising and supporting these important civic events, ensuring the community comes together to honour those who have served and continue to serve.



Be kind



Byddwch yn garedig

COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

Christmas Parade and Fairs: These events are a highlight for local families and provide an opportunity for the town to come together and celebrate the holiday season.

Coronation and Golden Jubilee Celebrations: The council organised the recent Golden Jubilee and Coronation events, reinforcing our commitment to recognising significant events in British history.

These initiatives highlight the council's role in maintaining a vibrant community, promoting local business, and preserving the town's unique culture and heritage.

3. Fitness for Purpose in an Evolving Local Government Landscape

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council believes that community and town councils are integral to the delivery of local services that larger governing bodies might not be able to address effectively. The sector's agility allows for quick responses to community needs and the capacity to organise local events that contribute significantly to community well-being.

However, we also recognise the need for ongoing capacity-building within the sector to meet new challenges, particularly in governance, digital engagement, and service provision. The introduction of new responsibilities through legislation, such as the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, has highlighted the need for councils to continuously adapt and develop. We are committed to evolving with these changes to ensure we remain fit for purpose.

4. Governance and Scrutiny Arrangements

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council maintains robust governance structures to ensure transparency and accountability in all our activities. We operate according to sound financial management principles and provide regular updates to the public through council meetings and digital platforms.

The council values the importance of strong scrutiny mechanisms, both internally and through external audits, and we continuously seek to improve our processes in line with best practice guidance from One Voice Wales and Audit Wales. However, we believe that further training and resources from higher levels of government could enhance the governance capacities of smaller councils across Wales.



COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

5. The Scope of Digital and New Technology

As the digital world rapidly evolves, Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council is actively exploring ways to enhance community engagement through digital tools and earlier this year recruited a Community Engagement Officer to lead this initiative. We are working to improve access to information via our website and social media channels, ensuring that residents can easily access updates about council activities, events, and services.

Additionally, since June 2021 we have facilitated hybrid council meetings, which broaden participation and allow greater flexibility for both councillors and residents. The integration of new and improved technology is key to our continued efforts in promoting transparency and engagement with the wider community.

6. Use of New Powers and Responsibilities to Support Communities

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council recognises the importance of utilising new powers granted by recent legislation to support the community effectively. We have leveraged these powers to enhance local services and strengthen our engagement with residents.

For instance, we have successfully collaborated with the Vale Borough Council on a Place Planning Project, which is set to be completed soon. As part of our efforts, we are continually building partnerships with local schools, businesses, and volunteer groups to provide services that address the needs of our community.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council welcomes this inquiry and sees it as an opportunity to reflect on our role and contributions to the community. We recommend that the committee consider the following:

Increased Support for Smaller Councils: Resources, training, and access to digital tools will help councils enhance their governance and service delivery capabilities.

Recognition of Community Contributions: Town and community councils should be acknowledged for their ability to respond swiftly and effectively to local needs, especially in organising cultural and civic events.

Strengthening of Governance: Continued guidance from bodies such as One Voice Wales will be essential in ensuring that councils remain accountable and transparent in their operations.

We look forward to the outcome of the inquiry and the opportunity to continue developing our council's role in supporting the vibrant community of Cowbridge with Llanblethian.



Be kind



Byddwch yn garedig

COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

Prepared by:

Cathy Kennedy, Chief Executive Town Clerk

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

Appendix One

Welsh Parliament
Local Government and Housing Committee

Stakeholder Event: Role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector



Date: 23 October 2024



Time: 10:30 – 12:00



Where: This is a hybrid event taking place in the Senedd or virtually on Zoom

The [Local Government and Housing Committee](#) is holding an inquiry into the [role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector](#).

-

To inform its inquiry, the Committee would like to invite clerks and members of town and community councils to participate in informal roundtable discussions on Wednesday 23 October.



Be kind



Byddwch yn garedig

COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN

Purpose of the sessions

The aim of the sessions will be to hear directly from town and community council clerks, and members in an informal environment on the issues outlined in the terms of reference, which are to examine:

- The role and value of community and town councils in Wales;
- Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape;
- Governance and scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency;
- Scope of digital and new technology to improve decision-making, service provision and participation in local democratic processes;
- How new powers and responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities.

Format and official languages

The event will be in hybrid format with participants attending either in person at the Senedd or virtually on Zoom. Please indicate in your response whether you will attend in person or online and note that it may not be possible to accommodate any changes submitted later than 5 working days before the event.

English and Welsh are official languages of the Senedd. Please indicate your language preferences in response to this email.



RSVP: 14 October 2024



SeneddHousing@senedd.wales



[0300 200 6565](tel:03002006565)



www.senedd.wales/SeneddHousing



Be kind



Byddwch yn garedig

COWBRIDGE (ANCIENT BOROUGH) with
LLANBLETHIAN TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF
Y BONTFAEN (Bwrdeistref Hynafol) gyda
LLANFLEIDDAN



When responding, please let us know about any dietary and/or accessibility requirements you may have (including access requirements and communication support).

