

Agenda for Special Meeting

27 July 2021

1 - Apologies for Absence

2 - Declarations of Interest

3 - Committee Restructure

AGREE a new committee structure.

Please note Paul Egan's report and Chair's and Clerk's proposal.

4 - August Meeting of Council

CONSIDER whether to hold a monthly meeting in August.

5 - Annual Meeting

CONSIDER whether to reconvene the adjourned Annual Meeting on Tuesday, 7 September 2021 at 6 pm.

MUMBLES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

April 2021

Prepared by Paul Egan, Deputy Chief Executive of One Voice Wales

1. INTRODUCTION

Mumbles Community Council commissioned One Voice Wales to undertake an assessment of its Committee structure based on the following agreed specification:

- a) To review the current terms of reference of the Council.
- b) To compare the terms of reference of Committees and other Groups in four selected Councils of a similar population size and budget level.
- c) To set out the terms of reference of comparable Councils in a tabulation to enable an effective comparison to be made.
- d) To offer several options for changing the terms of reference of the Council if this was considered to be desirable along with the likely benefits that could be achieved.

2. COMPARATORS USED FOR THE REVIEW

The four comparator Councils used for the assessment were as follows:

South Wales Town Council

West Wales Town Council

Mid Wales Town Council

South East Wales Town Council

Table 1 – This provides the Council with details of population, precept level, charge per band D household, summary of services and facilities and the committee structures of the comparators.

3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

There are a range of advantages and disadvantages associated with Committee structures which can be summarised as follows:

Advantages

- Can be appointed on a short term or long-term basis as dictated by organisational needs, activities and resources of the Council
- They can work on behalf of the Council and they can establish Sub-Committees which enable them to break down the work further into more manageable quantities
- They can be established as advisory Committee saving Council time whilst at the same time enabling the Council to consider recommendations from Committees rather than going into depth in relation to all matters relating to their work
- Those with full delegated powers can make the Council's decision-making process more efficient and without them the full Council must meet whenever it needs to decide about Council business, responsibility for which has not been delegated to staff. Very regular meetings of the Council or indeed Committees if there are many of them can place a burden on Councillor's time
- Committees and Sub-Committees can include non-Councillors giving a wider perspective on matters
- They can harness the special interests, skills and knowledge of members
- They can be dissolved when there is no longer a need for them

Disadvantages

- ❖ If a Council or Committee assumes the responsibilities that it has delegated to a Committee or Sub-Committee, which it is free to do, this duplicates efforts and undermines the appointment of the Committee or the Sub-Committee
- ❖ If a Council or Committee routinely challenges the decisions of a Committee or Sub-Committee with delegated responsibilities, confidence in the Council as a whole is likely to suffer
- ❖ There may be an insufficient number of Councillors or non-Councillors available to appoint to Committees

- ❖ A Council may not have adequate staff resources to support the meetings of Committees and Sub-Committees.

4. KEY POINTS IDENTIFIED FROM THE COMPARISON

- a) Mumbles CC has seven appointed Committees which appear to have some overlapping themes. These are supplemented by two sub-committees arranged of Working Groups detailed in Table 1 to this report.
- b) Of the comparator Councils, the South Wales Town has 5 Committees, the West Wales Town has 3 Committees, the Mid Wales Town has 5 Committees, and the South East Wales Town has 4 Committees.
- c) Some of the functions of comparator Towns have full delegation where appropriate.
- d) The budget level of Mumbles CC is less than the comparator Towns and does not currently have such a wide range of facilities and services that as is the case with the comparator towns.
- e) It would appear that the design of Committee structures in the comparator towns is cognisant of the level of staff resources available to support their structures coupled with the fact that I am aware that they have schedules of delegation in place for officers to deal with a range of appropriate matters.
- f) Looking at the commonality of the structures (see Table 2) it can be seen that: -
 - a) All Councils have a **Personnel Committee** or something similar with differing descriptions such as Management Committee, Resources Committee or having the function linked to a Committee with wider terms of reference.
 - b) Four of five Councils have a **Finance Committee** or something similar with differing descriptions such as Resources Committee and in one case with wider terms of reference encompassing Policy and HR.
 - c) Only one Council has an **Appeals Committee** which is essential to enable the Council to deal with any appeals against disciplinary or grievance matters.
 - d) Mumbles CC has 4 different **Well Being** Committees based on a range of themes. Other Councils have different arrangements in place with one Council having an all-encompassing General Purposes Committee, another with

separate Regeneration and Community Engagement/Well-Being Committees, another with an Economy and Environment Committee and one with an Environmental, Planning and Development Committee.

e) Mumbles has a **Premises** Committee, one has a Services Committee and another with an Events, Venues and Open Spaces Committee.

f) None of the comparator Councils have a Joint Enabling Committee.

Table 3-6 will enable the Council to compare in more depth how other Councils manage their business through their respective Committee structures.

5. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The structure of Committees in Mumbles CC is quite unique and differs markedly from the comparator Councils. Possible issues arising from the structure might be that terms of reference are over-lapping which can cause difficulties in relation to coordination of the different work streams. There may also be a difficulty in relation to the staff resources required to service each of the Committees and the amount of member time involved in relation to attendance.

If the Council wishes to review and possibly change the current structure there appear to be a few options available to it. These might include: -

a) The possibility of linking Finance, Personnel and Building Management matters within one Committee (e.g., One of the comparator Councils has what it calls a Management Committee, another calls it a Resources Committee and another example is one called a Policy Resources Finance HR and Appeals Committee).

b) I would suggest that an Appeals Committee should be a separate standing committee required to meet as and when required to deal with grievance and disciplinary appeals. This would enable the Council to have in place an appeals mechanism with members who are sufficiently independent and objective to hear appeals.

- c) One Council has a Strategy and Corporate Projects Committee which does appear to be a sensible option given that the focus is on planning and developing corporate projects. Projects once completed come within the remit of a Services Committee. Other Councils consider such duties to be the responsibility of the full Council.
- d) In terms of the focus that Mumbles CC has on 'well-being' in the title of all Committees, the Council might want to consider the creation of a single well-being Committee to focus on those elements of the well-being agenda of most importance to the community such as community engagement, special events tourism and leisure.
- e) When the Council has sufficient facilities and services to manage it may be necessary to consider the creation of a separate Services Committee.
- f) It is currently accepted that the environmental impact associated with all economic progress should be built into forward planning, and indeed, that there are intrinsic benefits to business and commerce adopting environmentally friendly practices. Accordingly, it would make sense to link environmental and economic matters.

In summary, the Council might want to consider creating a Committee structure comprising of no more than 3-4 active Committees plus full Council, with an Appeals Committee in place to meet on an ad hoc basis when needed. It is suggested that the possible structure might look as follows with a clear need for the first three and possible consideration of the fourth or incorporating the responsibilities of four into an overreaching full Council: -

Resources Committee (To deal with Finance, Premises and other physical resources such as parks, HR and Governance matters).

Community Engagement and Well-Being Committee (Engagement plans, partnership working and steering the well-being agenda)

Strategy and Corporate Projects Committee (Development of the corporate strategy, identification of corporate projects and review and monitoring of the strategy and project advancement)

Economy and Environment Committee (Specific focus on economic issues including tourism as well as the environmental issues affecting the community)

In time it may be necessary to create a **Services Committee** to create a governance arrangement for the practical elements relating to services and facilities delivered by the Council.

6. CONCLUSION

This report is intended to provide the Council with information to enable it to compare its own structure with comparator Councils and to generate discussion in relation to an assessment of its current governance structure enabling it to consider what might be a more effective arrangement for the future. The issue of the time-consuming nature of the existing structure was mentioned in the brief provided to me and I am aware that not all Councils operate to a strict monthly timetable for every Committee with many having a break from meetings in August each year. The Council might consider the main committees meeting on a minimum of 10 times a year and the specialist committees meeting less frequently according to need or on a six weekly cycle given the time often needed to progress matters with a small team of support staff. I am aware that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk have a range of project delivery responsibilities as well as Committee responsibilities and regard should be given to the extent to which it is reasonable to expect them to continue to resource such a large number of Committee, Sub-Committee and Working Group support needs. Furthermore, I am aware that budgets have been aligned to the current governance structure and the timing of any changes will need to be cognisant of the financial accounting changes that will be required.

Committees: Chair's & Clerk's Proposal

| | Committee | Items | Sub Committees & Working Parties |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| 1. | Finance & Compliance <i>Asset Management, Compliance, Finance & Grants</i> Officer: Paul Beynon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation ▪ Evaluation ▪ Training ▪ Future Generations compliance ▪ Policies ▪ Asset Management – e.g., Ostreme. ▪ Financial Oversight Community Grants Awards ▪ Anything not dealt with by other committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCA/MCC JWG ▪ GDPR (sub-committee) |
| 2. | Community & Social Development <i>Facilities Development, Community Asset Transfer & Highways safety Issues</i> Officer: Steve Heydon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regeneration ▪ Large Projects – usually sporting Skatepark ▪ Community Asset Transfer – Tennis Courts, Bowls Green ▪ Highways – safety issues ▪ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underhill JWG ▪ Public Toilets Working Group |
| 3. | Environmental <i>Cleansing, Green Transport, Placemaking, Place Plan, Carbon Reduction & Biodiversity</i> Officers: Steve Heydon & Jasmine Weedon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate Emergency / Carbon Reduction ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Cleansing ▪ SMUGS Project ▪ Recycling Bin Provision ▪ Green Transport ▪ Placemaking ▪ Place Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SMUGS Operational Working Group ▪ SMUGS Steering Working Group ▪ Place Making Working Group ▪ Planning Sub-Committee |

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| 4. | Culture, Tourism & Communication <i>Brand MCC, Tourism, Culture, Displays, Festivals & Events</i> Officers: Paul Beynon & Claire Anderson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newsletter, website and social media ▪ Mumbles App ▪ Culture ▪ Tourism ▪ Promotion of Shops ▪ Events ▪ Events in Ostreme ▪ Digital Archive ▪ Decorative Lighting ▪ Floral Decorations & Hanging Baskets ▪ Mumbles in Bloom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Digital Archive (sub-committee) ▪ Mumbles in Bloom (new sub-committee) |
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| 5. | Personnel <i>Ad hoc basis</i> | | |
| 6. | Appeals <i>Ad hoc basis</i> | | |