



# **WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS AND THE LOCAL COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

**June 2012**

As agreed at the Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013

# **WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS AND THE LOCAL COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. This document is intended to set a framework for positive and productive working relationships between members of town and community councils and the local County Councillor for the electoral division that coincides with the area of the community council. Sometimes, there may be more than one local County Councillor serving the area. The local County Councillor might also be a member of the town or community council.
2. Whatever the arrangements, all members need to understand, respect and value the respective roles of the community councillor and the county councillor, and to recognise that all councillors have a common purpose in serving the citizens of their communities.
3. This document compares the powers and duties of Carmarthenshire County Council with those of community Councils. It explains the role of the local County Councillor. It looks at the importance of good communications between community councillors and the local County Councillor. It suggests how community council meetings can be arranged and conducted with these aims in mind.

## **POWERS AND ROLES**

4. **Appendix A** provides a list of the main powers available to community councils. Decisions are made by the community council when sitting together as a full Council. Decisions may also be made by Committees of the Council, if delegated to that committee in writing by the Council. Decisions cannot be made by individual councillors. Decisions may only be made by the Clerk if delegated to him or her in writing by the Council.
5. A list of the main services provided by Carmarthenshire County Council can be found on the Council's website at [www.carmarthenshire.co.uk](http://www.carmarthenshire.co.uk). Details of the decision-making structure are contained in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, which is also on the website. A summary of the decision-making

structure is shown in the chart at **Appendix B**. All councillors meet together as the Council to agree the annual budget and the Council's overall policies. The Executive Board is responsible for implementing policies agreed by the Council and taking decisions on matters that are not the responsibility of the Council or one of its committees. Each Executive Board Member may take decisions within their individual portfolio. Operational and management decisions are delegated from these various bodies to officers under a Scheme of Delegation.

6. **Appendix C** gives a summary of the role of a County Councillor and **Appendix D** a summary of the role of a Town and Community Councillor.

### **WHAT MAKES FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION?**

7. As a foundation for good working relationships it is important that all community councillors and the local County Councillor understand and respect both the scope and the practical limitations of their respective roles.
8. Community councillors understand that many issues that come to their attention are the responsibility of the County Council. As a matter of good practice, all such requests and enquiries should be referred to the County Council via the local County Councillor. If constituents approach a community councillor about a County Council issue they should be advised to contact the local County Councillor direct.
9. The Local County Councillor will try to assist in all matters referred to him or her and to keep the community council and /or the relevant community councillor informed about the progress and outcome of the enquiry, where appropriate.
10. Community councillors appreciate that many County Council functions, processes and decisions are not within the direct control or influence of the local County Councillor. Community Councillors also understand that the local County Councillor is not individually accountable for any such matters to the community council, or any individual community councillor.
11. The local County Councillor understands that the Community council and its councillors are not accountable to the local county Councillor where the local County Councillor has referred a matter to the Community Council that lies within the scope of the Community Council's functions.

## **ATTENDANCE AT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

12. Community Councillors understand that the local County Councillor is not required to attend their meetings as part of his/her constitutional role. However, both the community Councillors and the local County Councillor recognise that positive working relationships are best sustained and developed by the local County Councillor attending meetings of the community council, as a representative of the County Council.
13. The Community Council and the local County Councillor agree that the following general arrangements constitute good practice for meetings of community councils, subject to any individual agreement to modify or amend these arrangements:-
  1. An item may be placed on the Agenda entitled "County Councillor's report", the scope of which would allow the local County Councillor to address the meeting on topics of his/her choice.
  2. As an alternative to placing an item on the agenda, the local County Councillor would have an opportunity to feedback information relating to County Council issues and allow community councillors to ask questions.
  3. When sending out the Summons to Community Councillors, the Clerk will send a written invitation to the local County Councillor (addressed to his/her home address), together with a copy of the Agenda and any reports and background papers for the meeting.
  4. The local County Councillor will advise the Clerk whether he/she is intending to attend the meeting, prior to the meeting.
  5. When attending a meeting, the local County Councillor will declare any personal interest or prejudicial interest in relation to any item of business, at the start of the meeting.
  6. Subject to 7 below, the local County Councillor will vacate the chamber when he/she considers that he/she has a personal and prejudicial interest in any business, prior to the start of any discussion of that business.

7. Where the local County Councillor has been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee of the County Council he/she may act within the terms of that dispensation.
8. Subject to 5 above, the local County Councillor may speak in relation to any business conducted at the meeting. The local County Councillor may not vote in respect of any business, unless he or she is also a member of that community council.
9. Subject to 5 above, where the Community Council passes a resolution to exclude the public and press in relation to any business, the Local County Councillor will be entitled to remain in the chamber for the duration of the item.
10. Where the local County Councillor remains in the council chamber during discussion of a matter where the public and press have been excluded, the local County Councillor will agree to maintain confidentially in respect of any such discussions and agrees to return any papers distributed with regard to that item to the Clerk at the end of discussion of that business.
11. The local County Councillor understands that he/she is subject to the Code of Conduct for Members as adopted by Carmarthenshire County Council on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008 whilst attending the meeting and accepted by the member after his/her election. Community Councillors understand that they are subject to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Community Council when attending any meeting of the Community Council.

**SIGNED** on behalf of **ONE VOICE WALES**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNED** on behalf of **CARMARTHENSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

As agreed at the Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013

## Appendix A: Functions that can be carried out by Community and Town Councils

<b>Allotments</b>	Provision and maintenance of allotments for cultivation.
<b>Arts</b>	Developing and improving knowledge of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts.
<b>Baths</b>	Provision of baths and wash-houses (including launderettes)
<b>Cemeteries</b>	Provision and maintenance of burial grounds, cemeteries, crematoria, mortuaries and post-mortem rooms.
<b>Clocks</b>	Provision and maintenance of public clocks
<b>Commons</b>	Power to protect any finally registered common which had no registered owner.
<b>Crime Prevention</b>	Installation of equipment and establishment of schemes for the detection or prevention of crime (eg. CCTV cameras; Neighbourhood Watch); making grants to the police authority for these purposes
<b>Entertainment</b>	Provision of any form of public entertainment and any premises for giving entertainment (this includes maintaining bands or orchestras and provision for dancing).
<b>Halls</b>	Provision of buildings for public meetings and functions, for indoor sports or physical recreation, or for the use of clubs and societies having recreational, social or athletic objects.
<b>Legal Proceedings</b>	Power to prosecute and defend any legal proceedings in the interests of the inhabitants. Power to take part in any public local inquiry
<b>Lighting</b>	Provision and maintenance of any footway lighting which lights roads or pavements provided the columns are not above specified heights.
<b>Litter</b>	Provision of litter bins in streets and support for anti-litter campaigns

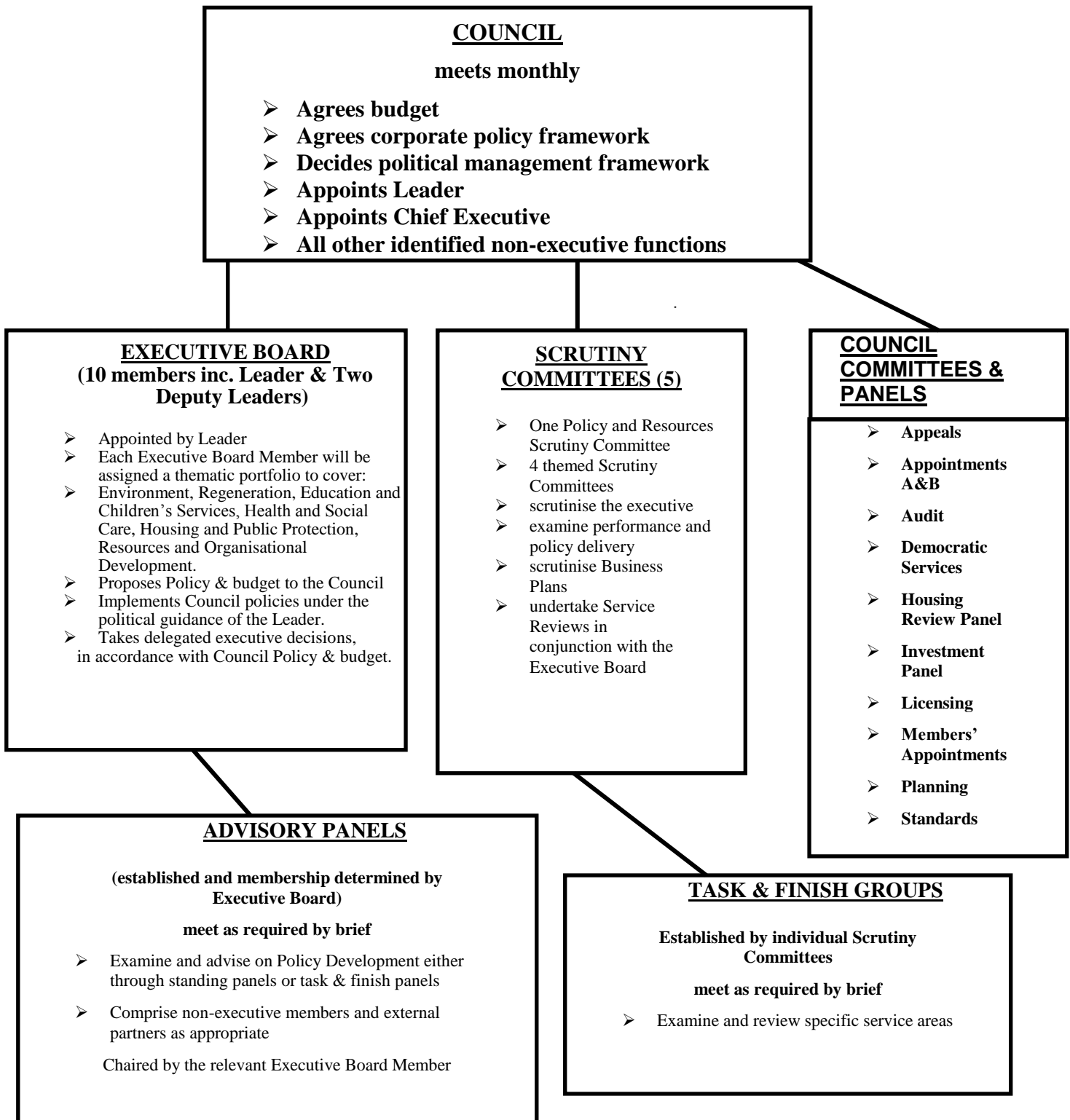
<b>Open Spaces</b>	Provision and maintenance of public open spaces, pleasure grounds and public walks
<b>Parking</b>	Provision and management of car and cycle parks
<b>Parks</b>	Provision and maintenance of public parks and appropriate facilities
<b>Planning</b>	Right to be notified of any planning application affecting the community and town council area and to make comments that the planning authority must take into account
<b>Playing fields</b>	Provision and maintenance of land for any kind of outdoor recreation, including boating pools
<b>Ponds</b>	Power to deal with ponds, pools or other places containing filth or matter prejudicial to health
<b>Post and Telephone</b>	Power to guarantee the postal or telephone authorities against a loss on a facility
<b>Public Lavatories</b>	Provision and maintenance of public lavatories
<b>Rights of Way</b>	Maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways
<b>Roadside Verges</b>	Power to plant and maintain roadside verges
<b>Seats</b>	Provision and maintenance of public seats on the highway
<b>Shelters</b>	Provision and maintenance of shelters for general public use and particularly for bus passengers
<b>Signs</b>	Power to erect signs which warn of dangers or announce a place name, or indicate a bus stop
<b>Swimming</b>	Provision of indoor or outdoor swimming pools
<b>Tourism</b>	Provision of facilities for conferences and encouragement of recreational and business tourism

<b>Traffic Calming</b>	Contribution towards the cost of traffic calming works provided by highway authorities
<b>Transport</b>	Establishment of car-sharing and taxi fare concession schemes; making grants for community bus services and bus services for the elderly or disabled; investigation of public transport, road and traffic provision and needs; provision of information about public transport services
<b>Village Green</b>	Powers to maintain the village or town green



## APPENDIX B

# POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE



As agreed at the Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013

## **APPENDIX C**

### **THE ROLE OF A COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

1. County Councillors are accountable to the County Council and to the constituents of the ward to which they were elected. They represent the interests of their ward and their individual constituents. They sometimes act as advocates for the County Council in their ward and the communities they serve. They contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making by the County Council and its partnerships.
2. County Councillors act as a channel for communication to the community on County Council strategies, policies, services and procedures. They represent individual constituents and local organisations at the County Council and undertake casework on their behalf, serving all fairly. They liaise with Executive Board Members, other council members, council officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of local communities are identified, understood and supported.
3. County Councillors must promote tolerance and cohesion in their local communities. They will notify the appropriate Executive Board Member about service performance or policy issues raised at meetings of Community Networks. They are required to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics. They participate in the governance and management of the County Council by contributing to the decision-making process at meetings of the County Council and its committees.
4. County Councillors are collectively the ultimate policy-makers for the County Council and they carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions, including overseeing performance. They must adhere to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision making and they have a role in promoting and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of council and other public services.
5. County Councillors will represent and act as advocates for the County Council on outside bodies, with the aim of promoting common interests and co-operation for mutual gain. They will represent and be an advocate for the Council on local outside bodies. They promote and support good governance of the County Council and its affairs. They provide community leadership and promote active citizenship.

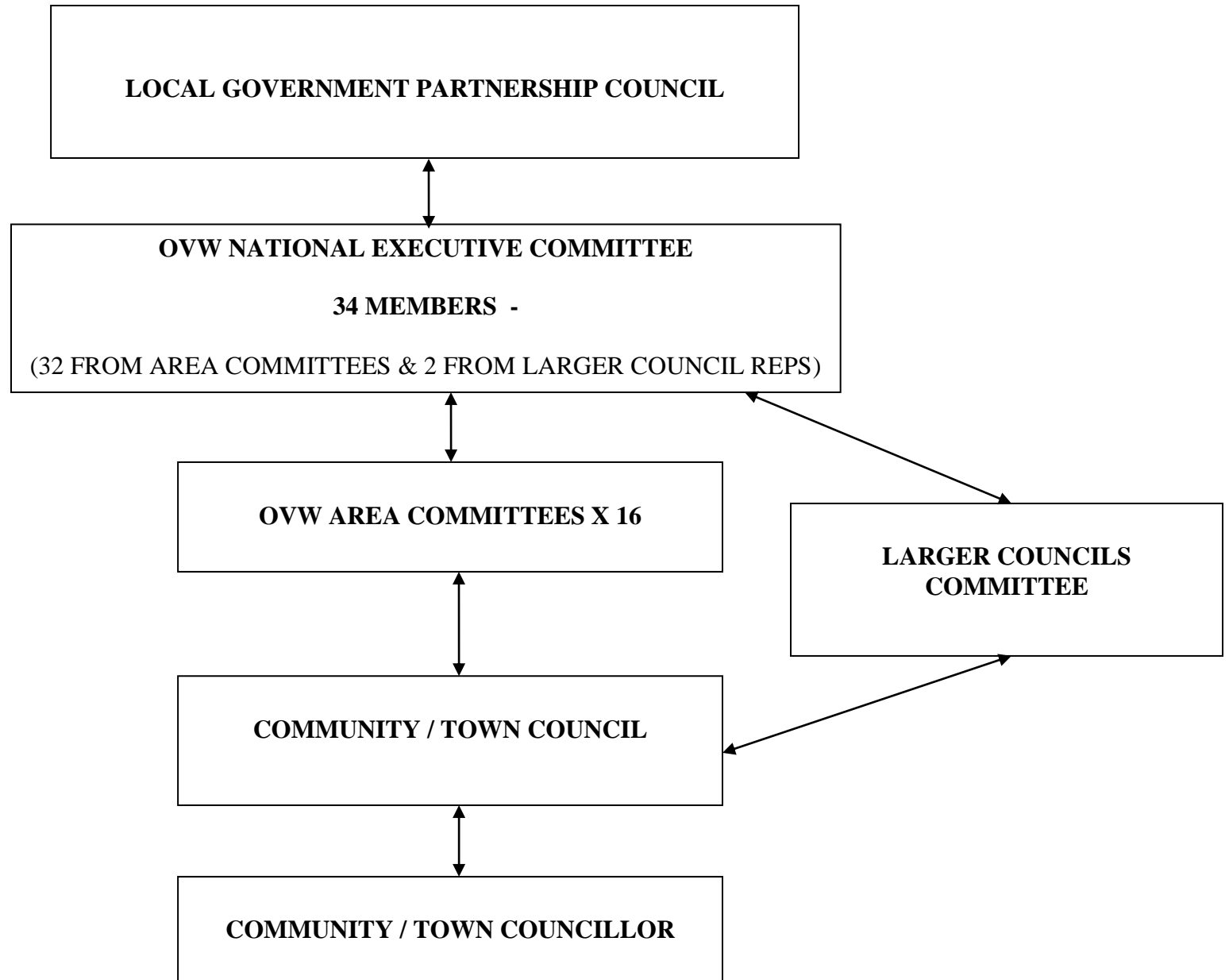
## **APPENDIX D**

### **THE ROLE OF A COMMUNITY/TOWN COUNCILLOR**

1. Community/Town Councillors are accountable to their Community/Town Council and to the constituents of the ward or community to which they were elected. They represent the interests of their ward or community and their individual constituents. They sometimes act as advocates for the Community/Town Council in their wards or the communities they serve. They contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making by the Community/Town Council and its partnerships.
2. Community/Town Councillors act as a channel for communication to the community on Community/Town Council strategies, policies, services and procedures. They represent individual constituents and local organisations at the Community/Town Council and undertake any relevant casework on their behalf, serving all fairly. They liaise with other council members, with their Clerk and any other council officers and with partner organisations to ensure that the needs of local communities are identified, understood and supported.
3. Community/Town Councillors must promote tolerance and cohesion in their local communities. They will notify their Clerk about service performance or policy issues raised from time to time. They are required to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics. They participate in the governance and management of the Community/Town Council by contributing to the decision-making process at meetings of the Community/Town Council and its committees.
4. Community/Town Councillors are collectively the ultimate policy-makers for the Community/Town Council and they carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions, including overseeing performance. They must adhere to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision making and they have a role in promoting and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of council and other public services.
5. Community/Town Councillors may represent and act as advocates for the Community/Town Council on outside bodies, with the aim of promoting common interests and co-operation for mutual gain. They may represent and be an advocate for the Council on local outside bodies. They promote and support good governance of the Community/Town Council and its affairs. They provide community leadership and promote active citizenship.

**Appendix E**

**One Voice Wales Community & Town Councils Organisational Structure**



As agreed at the Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013