

Final report on “grassroots of governance” published

In June last year, we commissioned an independent review on the future role of Community and Town Councils in Wales.

A panel of experts, co-chaired by former Assembly Members Gwenda Thomas and Rhodri Glyn Thomas, was asked to explore the current, and potential role of town and community councils in Wales.

Over the past year, the Panel has held an extensive engagement exercise, with the sector, stakeholders and the public, to understand on how communities in Wales can best be supported through this tier of democracy. The Panel held a series of public events around the country, issued targeted surveys, and invited written evidence.

Today the Panel presented its final report to the Welsh Government. Its recommendations include ensuring that every area in Wales is supported by a Community and Town Council, and that they should be established in areas that don't currently have one; and making all place-based services the responsibility of Community and Town Councils.

Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services Alun Davies said,

“Community and Town Councils are the grassroots of governance in Wales – hyper local democracy – and the tier closest to our citizens. They should be accountable to local people and represent the interests of the different parts of the community equally.

“I would like to place on record my thanks to the Panel for the conscientious and constructive way they have undertaken their responsibilities. I will now consider the Panel's recommendations and how we can use this wide-ranging evaluation of town and community councils to support our aims to modern democracy in Wales.”

Gwenda Thomas said,

“Over the last year, we feel we have delivered a truly evidence-based review, with over a thousand points of contact including over 800 responses to our dedicated surveys, with over 100 responses from young people. Our findings and recommendations have been shaped by these views and, in some cases, may seem radical, but we feel represent the scale of opportunity available to Town and Community councils in Wales.”

Rhodri Glyn Thomas said,

“We know that whilst we can learn from the past and only deal with the present, we have a role to prepare Community and Town Councils for the future. We believe that if we are to succeed in improving the well-being of future generations, Community and Town Councils have a vital role in contributing towards this – and should be recognised.”