

North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and Town/Parish and Village Councils Charter

Introduction

1. The Town/Parish and Village Councils and North East Lincolnshire Borough Council have agreed to publish a charter which sets out how they aim to work together for the benefit of local people.

This Charter is the result of discussions locally to establish a new way of working and to confirm existing good practice and teamwork. It is underpinned by the shared principles of:

- Openness
 - Mutual Respect
 - Honesty
 - Responsibility
 - Transparency
 - Accessibility
2. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and the Town/Parish and Village Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their community. They offer a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities. In turn Town/Parish and Village Councils recognises the strategic role of North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and the equitable distribution of services which it has to achieve.
 3. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council acknowledges that Town/Parish and Village Council is at the grass-roots level of local government. By working together we aim to act in

partnership with local communities, while balancing the needs of the wider community.

4. This Charter reflects the increasing importance attached by both the Borough Council and Town/Parish and Village Councils to partnership working and the development of Quality Status.
5. This will be our governing Charter and focuses on establishing a framework for working together based on improved communication and understanding as well as clarity regarding roles and responsibilities. There is a shared commitment to review this Charter every 3 years.
6. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will actively promote and distribute the Charter and remind all officers to adhere to the principle and meaning of this Charter.

Sustainability

7. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will work in partnership with Town/Parish and Village Councils to promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development for the benefit of local communities. The Borough Council will encourage the Town/Parish and Village Councils too exercise available powers, not least of which is the power of well-being.

Community strategies and local partnerships

8. Town/Parish and Village councils have a community leadership role in our partnership arrangements. They will be actively involved in relevant ward working and feed in to ward plans and wider borough strategies. As place leaders they have a role to play in creating and supporting a stronger economy and stronger communities and will feed in to

borough partnership arrangements through links with elected members, named contacts within partnership organisations and input in to theme boards and partnership forums.

9. Town/Parish and Village councils will be invited to develop and manage ward plans that impact on their area and will be expected to use their role within the community to shape the plan, raise awareness of it and seek ownership of the plan and encourage communities to be involved in delivering the agreed priorities / actions outlined within the plan.

Local governance

10. Governance arrangements will include:

- North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will hold quarterly liaison meetings with representatives of all Parish/Town and Village Councils (2 Nominated Representatives from each Parish/Town and Village Council). The liaison meeting will provide an opportunity to refer unresolved matters of concern to Scrutiny, and a nominated representative will be invited to speak at the appropriate Scrutiny meeting.
- Town/Parish and Village Councils will invite their respective Ward Members, and relevant officers of North East Lincolnshire Borough Council to all Council meetings, and that the Ward Members be invited to speak and give a Ward report.
- A commitment from Town/Parish and Village Councils and North East Lincolnshire Borough Council to involve themselves in the above arrangements, including the induction of newly elected Councillors for both the Borough Council and the Town/Parish and Village Councils.

11. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will administer the holding of Town/Parish and Village Council elections. The respective authorities will work together to limit the costs of holding such elections. This will include:

- Electoral Register
- Election Publicity
- Polling Stations and Postal Votes
- Count

Consultation

12. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will afford the Town/Parish and Village Councils the opportunity to comment before making any decision which affects their ward. In furtherance of this, North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will circulate an electronic list of its public reports to committees and subcommittees to The Clerk of Town/Parish and Village Councils at the same time as they are sent to members of NELC. Town/Parish and Village Councils can request a copy of any public report and is encouraged to comment directly to members of the Borough Council.

13. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will:

- Circulate electronically the list of all planning applications received in a timely manner to Town/Parish and Village Council for their ward, or by whatever means is required, to ensure that items can be considered on the agenda for Town/Parish Council meetings.

- Consult regarding disposal of North East Lincolnshire Borough Council land and assets within the respective ward area.
 - Engage on an ongoing basis around the development and delivery of ward plans
 - Consult with Town/Parish and Village Councils on their individual local emergency plans and Town/Parish and Village Councils will commit to review these plans on an annual basis.
14. Town/Parish and Village Councils will make electronic copies of their agendas and papers available to North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and to Ward Councilors for their area. Officers and Councillors of the North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will be given an opportunity to speak at Town/Parish and Village Council meetings on matters of mutual interest.

Information and complaints

15. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will ensure that any of its public buildings, web pages etc are given appropriate information about the Town/Parish and Village Councils, and vice versa.
16. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and Town/Parish and Village Councils will reply to all communications sent by the other party within 10 working days, with an acknowledgement sent.
17. If either Council is dissatisfied with the action of the other, the response to a request for information, or a failure to consult, then a formal complaint may be made. These will then be dealt with through the respective Council's complaint management procedures.

Standards and Adjudication Committee

18. Both North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and Town/Parish and Village Councils have adopted codes of conduct, based on the national model code of conduct. The Town/Parish and Village Councils will work with North East Lincolnshire Borough Council's Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. This will include training on standards and ethics provided by North East Lincolnshire Council's Monitoring Officer.

Delegating Responsibility for Service Provision

19. Opportunities will be explored for Town/Parish and Village Councils to discharge functions on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Borough Council, who will consider this where it provides best value (taking account of cost, quality, local preferences and practicability) and provide the name of a nominated officer to liaise with the Town/Parish Council. Where it is not good value or practicable North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will, in consultation with Town/Parish and Village Councils, explore alternative solutions to encourage more local-level input into service delivery, and encourage Town/Parish and Village Councils, or a group of Councils, to take on aspects of the delivery, management and monitoring of services currently provided by them.

Financial Arrangements

20. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will set out its financial arrangements for Town/Parish and Village Councils in accordance with the principles and good practice guidance on delegated service delivery, and explore opportunities to avoid double taxation.

21. Where Town/Parish and Village Councils takes on the provision of certain services, the level of funding will be agreed by North East Lincolnshire Borough Council and Town/Parish and Village Councils, through a formal Service Level agreement.

Local Community Life

22. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will evidence initiatives to promote local community life through any of its publications and afford Town/Parish and Village Councils Council space to promote any of their initiatives also.

Practical support

23. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will, where practicable, enable Town/Parish and Village Council access to their own support services, and enable them to take advantage of facilities such as printing and purchasing, at a mutually agreed price.
24. In particular, assistance will be offered in identifying and helping to meet the training needs of Town/Parish and Village Councils in association with ERNLLCA.
25. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will endeavour to ensure that Town/Parish and Village Councils are included as partners in any multi agency issues affecting them.
26. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will appoint a named liaison officer as a first point of contact.

Land use and Development Planning

27. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will involve and consult with Town/Parish and Village Councils in the

preparation of development plan documents that will make up the North East Lincolnshire Local Development Plan.

28. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will involve and consult with Town/Parish and Village Councils in the production of Supplementary Planning Documents, for example development briefs and parish design Statements.
29. North East Lincolnshire Borough Council will engage with Town/Parish and Village Councils on their individual local parish plan, provided due diligence and consultation has taken place within the Town/Parish and Village Council.