

Parish charter: Setting out the working relationship between North Yorkshire County Council and parish/ town councils

September 2018

Section 1: Introduction

- The purpose of this charter is to set out in one document how North Yorkshire County Council and parish/town councils and parish meetings can work together to provide high quality and efficient public services for the people of North Yorkshire.
- The charter is intended to be a starting point, a commitment to work together, and a statement of the principles by which the County Council and parish/town councils and parish meetings approach their work together.
- The charter provides a list of practical offers that the County Council can provide. It also sets out arrangements for parish/town councils and parish meetings to have a greater influencing role.

Section 2: Partnership working

- We (North Yorkshire County Council) will work in partnership with you (parish/town councils and parish meetings) in our area to promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development for the benefit of local communities.
- We recognise that as democratically accountable bodies, you are the grassroots level of local government. In turn, we ask that you recognise the strategic role of North Yorkshire County Council and the fair distribution of services that it must achieve.

Section 3: Local governance

- We have established six Area Constituency Committees (one for each MP's constituency) made up of all the County Council Members in that constituency. We will circulate notification of the publication of our Area Constituency Committee

agendas and papers on our website to your parish clerk at the same time as they are sent to our members.

- Members of the public, including members and officers of parish/town councils and parish meetings, can ask a question or make a statement at the start of ordinary meetings of the County Council, our Executive and our committees if notice including the full text of the question or statement has been given in writing or by electronic mail to our Democratic Services team (democratic.services@northyorks.gov.uk) no later than midday three working days before the day of the meeting. We publish the agendas and papers for our meetings at democracy.northyorks.gov.uk
- We ask that our officers and members be given an opportunity to speak at your meeting on matters of mutual interest.

Section 4: Consultation

- We will attend twice-yearly parish liaison meetings in those districts where there is a joint commitment with the district council to implement such arrangements. The purpose of these meetings will be to act as a liaison between parish/town councils and parish meetings, ourselves and the district council on matters of mutual interest.
- We will use plain English and keep our information jargon free when we consult with you.
- We will offer our information in different formats where that is appropriate.
- We will follow Government practice and allow 12 weeks for consultation where possible.
- We will feed back to you what has been said and what we are going to do as a result.
- We ask that wherever possible and relevant you will respond to consultations when approached by us and by the agreed deadlines e.g. by delegating the task to a committee or having an extra parish/town council meeting to meet the deadline.

Section 5: Information and complaints

- We ask you to notify our Democratic Services team (democratic.services@northyorks.gov.uk) of changes to the names/contact details of your parish clerk and parish chairman so that we can ensure that our parish contacts database is up-to-date.
- We will notify you of all programmed maintenance and improvement schemes due to be undertaken in your parish, this will be via email so please ensure we have your correct email address.
- We ask you to wherever possible use our website at www.northyorks.gov.uk to find information about our services and news updates including road, footpath closures, temporary traffic lights and diversions.
- Parish/town councils and parish meetings can report all non-urgent highway defects via our online reporting system. A new Parish Portal is available which has been designed specifically for use by you. This Portal was designed following engagement with parish/town councils and enables you to have a full record of all

reports made to NYCC Highways together with available updates for each case. If you require any details on the Parish Portal please contact your Local Highway Area Office. We do ask that all urgent issues are reported by telephone to 01609 780780. To report highway emergencies outside normal office hours we ask that you contact North Yorkshire Police on 101. Highway emergencies include any highway hazards such as flooding, mud/diesel spillages, carriageway debris, fallen trees and any road or footway defects which may be a danger to highway users. If your call relates to a social care emergency outside of normal office hours we ask you to telephone 01609 780780.

- We also ask you to gather evidence or feedback to assist us in our service delivery, including reporting road defects (e.g. potholes and drainage problems), and reporting misuse of weight restricted routes by heavy goods vehicles. This feedback can be provided via email to the local Highway Area Office or to Customer.Services@northyorks.gov.uk
- We will acknowledge communications sent by you in accordance with our customer services standards. Our policy is to acknowledge communications sent to us within 5 working days of receipt, and we will normally provide a full response (if required) within 20 working days. If this is not possible we will contact you to explain why and give you an indication of when you can expect a full reply. When we contact you we ask that you send a substantive reply within 28 working days (not including responses to consultation documents). This is unless there are exceptional reasons why this cannot happen.
- If you are dissatisfied with our actions, the response to a request for information, or a failure to consult, you may make a formal complaint through our complaints procedure.

Section 6: Delegating responsibility for service provision (applies to parish/town councils only)

- If you wish to carry out functions on our behalf we will consider delegation where it provides best value (taking into account cost, quality, local preferences and practicability). This will exclude a range of services which we are not able to delegate because of their particular statutory nature e.g. children's education, social care.

Section 7: Practical support

- We will offer you access to some of our services (e.g. printing, purchasing and training) at a mutually agreed price and joint procurement opportunities. This includes being able to join our street lighting energy contract and street lighting maintenance contract (applies to parish/town councils only).
- Our Strategy and Performance Team is able to act as a first point of contact when you are developing or refreshing your parish plan. To help guide you through the process we have produced a Parish Planning Guide: 'Parish Planning: A guide to the support available from North Yorkshire County Council'. Copies can be downloaded from the parish and town councils webpage on our website

www.northyorks.gov.uk/parishcouncils. When we receive a parish plan we will consider whether there are areas of a plan where we could help you locally.

- Our Stronger Communities Team can act as a point of contact for support and possible grant funding opportunities for community-based projects.
- Our Resilience and Emergencies Team can provide you with advice and guidance to develop a Community Resilience Scheme. This will enable you to increase your local community's resilience in the first few hours of an incident such as flooding, before the emergency services reach you.
- Your local County Councillor can provide information about County Council issues in your area and take your community's views into the County Council's decision-making process. They also have locality budgets which allow them to respond to local needs by recommending funding to support specific activities. You can find your local County Councillor at www.northyorks.gov.uk/councillors-information

Contact us:

North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD
Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm (closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: 01609 780780
Or visit our website at: www.northyorks.gov.uk

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us. Tel: 01609 780780 Email: communications@northyorks.gov.uk